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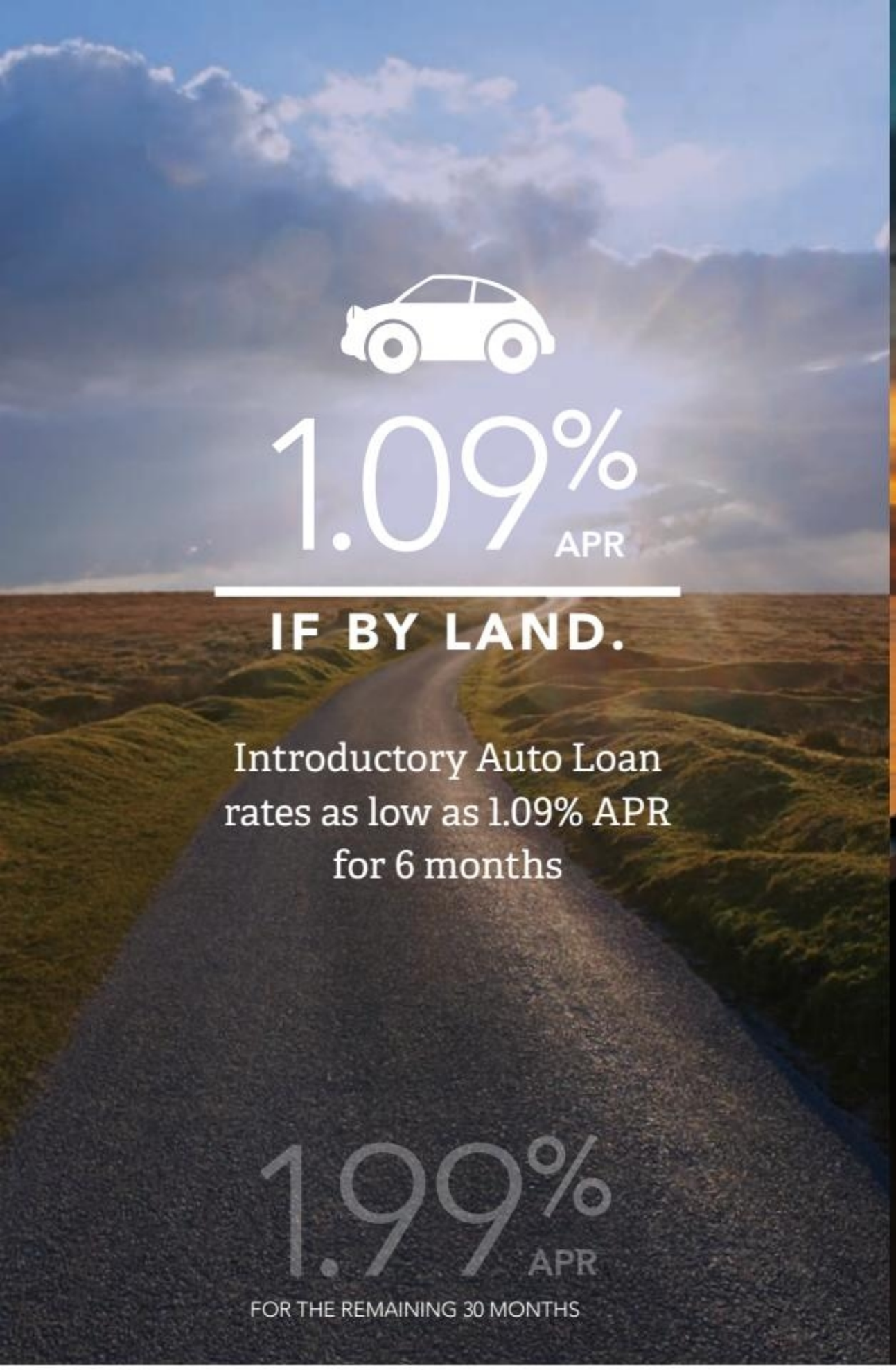

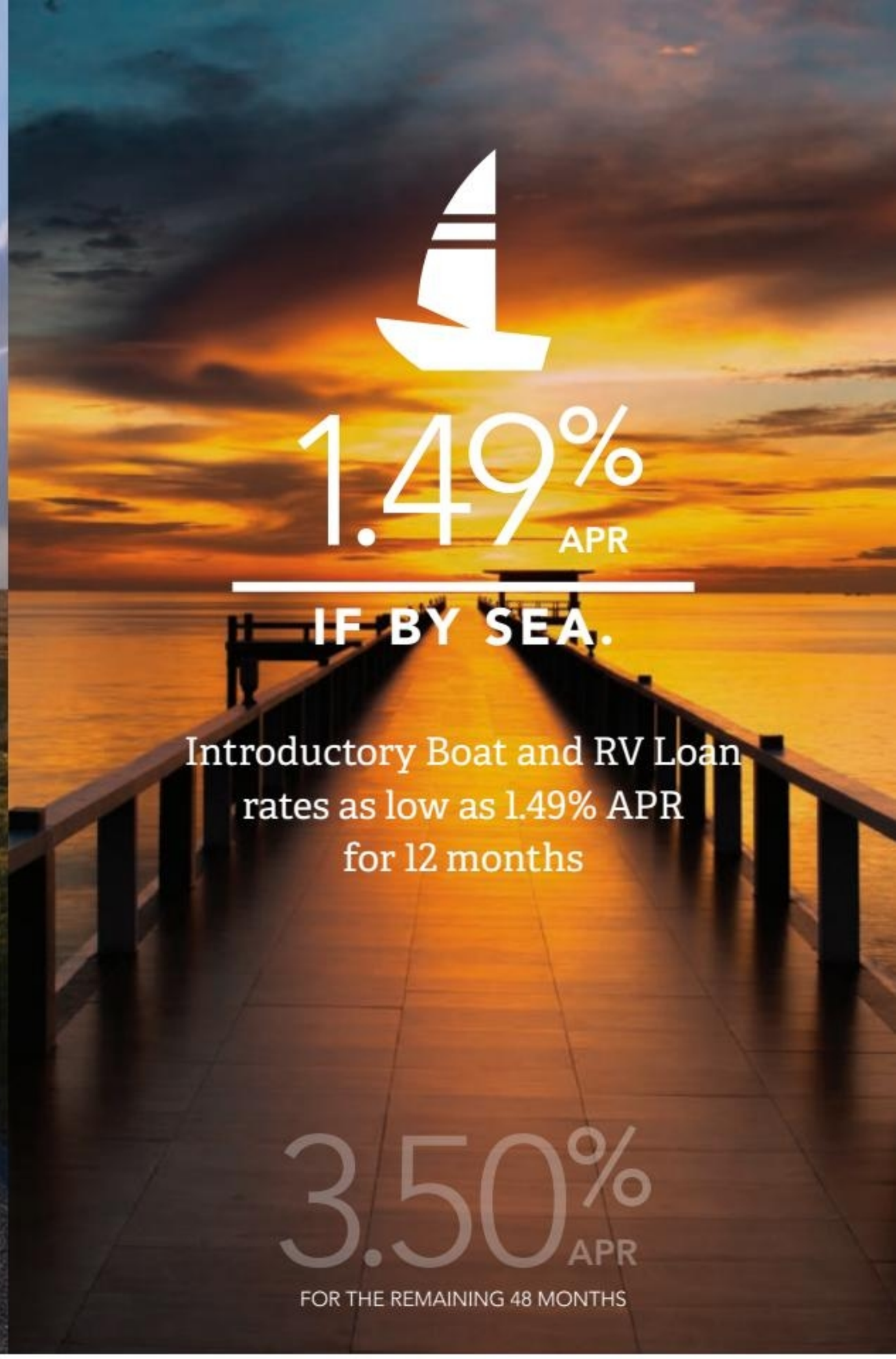

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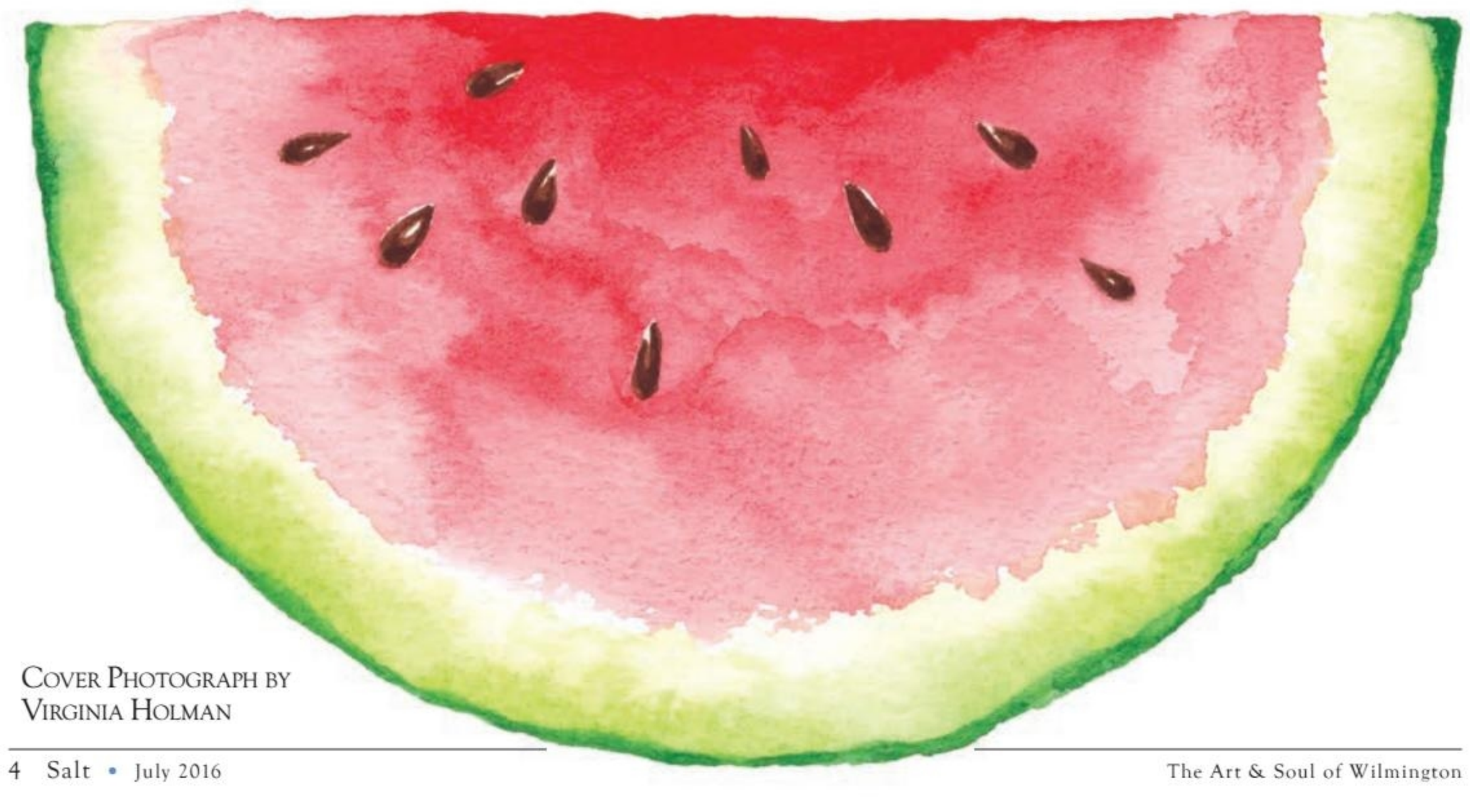

Cover Photograph by Virginia Holman

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Wilmington artist Jon Haug's "Glowing." Haug was awarded the People's Choice Award at the 2015 Art in the Arboretum Show, the Merit Award at the 2016 Azalea Festival and best drawing in the 2015 Silver Arts Show in Wilmington, NC.

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Treasures From a Vanishing World

By Jim Dodson

Not long ago, while taking a back road home from the coast, I rounded a curve and saw a handsome old farmhouse sitting in an overgrown field, clearly abandoned, with wild roses claiming one end of its sagging porch.

Ignoring a rapidly approaching thunderstorm, I pulled off the road to sit and look at the house, wondering about the people who once called such a beautiful old place home. I saw birds — swifts or starlings, I think — flying in and out of its flower-wreathed porch and thought of a recent conversation with a friend who roams the rural landscape of this state salvaging architectural pieces and forgotten artifacts from abandoned houses and farms, everything from doorknobs to bathtubs, barn doors to family Bibles, broken gates to foundation stones.

He calls his finds "treasures from a vanishing world," provocatively insisting that these ordinary objects and pieces of abandoned habitats not only bear the spiritual imprint of their former human associations, but also deep ancestral memories.

"You can see them everywhere," he says, "old houses sitting off in the woods, barns abandoned to make way for housing developments or wider highways for a society that can't get there fast enough.

"Such sights should haunt us," he adds with the fervor of an evangelical preacher. "We're throwing away our nation's natural history, destroying our heritage piece by piece, forgetting who we are and where we come from. It's a tragedy, something everyone who is truly patriotic ought to care about."

He showed me a beautiful bell salvaged from an abandoned schoolhouse near the town I regularly pass through. The craftsmanship was superb.

"The schoolhouse was made from the finest red brick, built by real craftsmen in a time when that meant something special, pride of hand, probably from the early 1930s, the heart of the Great Depression. It had charming wooden windows and handmade doors and an actual cupola. You could almost hear the voices coming from that empty schoolhouse — the place where kids learned to read and do their multiplication tables, memorized the fifty states and Pledge of Allegiance and fell in love with a girl or boy seated near them. Today saplings are growing through the floor of that beautiful old building, the wind whistling through its busted-out windows."

Like my friend Rick, I spend a lot of time driving the back roads of this state, looking at the land and noticing abandoned fields and places where someone once raised a family, birthed a child, waited for the passing of a loved one, or simply sat on a summer porch snapping beans in the long summer dusk the way my grandmother Taylor loved to do.

My reverence for small-town values and winding back roads — the slow way home, as I call it — is unapologetically romantic and lately seems almost as endangered as Rick's old schoolhouse bell, somehow connected to the soul of our collective patriotism.

What we worship, a wise man once told me sitting on his sagging porch in Vermont, we become. (But more on him in a slow lane moment.)

Every road I travel nowadays seems to be in a state of constant construction, half-built and ever widening to obliterate nature and anything that happens to be in its path, reminding me of my own vanished heritage.

Four generations back the patriarch of my family operated a vital gristmill on the banks of the Haw River and worked as a contract surveyor for the state, plotting out the boundaries of several central counties just after the Civil War. This man somehow found time to also serve as an itinerate Methodist preacher traveling from one rural parish to another, Piedmont to western hills, preaching the Gospel.

One winter afternoon a few years ago, my wife and I found George Washington Tate's headstone in the burying ground of a small Alamance County church. It was simple, dignified, garnished only by moss and time. He and his wife lay side by side.

It would have pleased me to show my Yankee wife the remains of G.W. Tate's once thriving gristmill on the banks of the Haw, but it was no longer there or simply hidden from view.

As a kid, I saw it several times and even fished from the stones of its original millrace, feeling as connected to that place as if it were consecrated earth. Today, you cannot find this spot because the Interstate was doubled in size two decades ago, swallowing my great-great-grandfather's gristmill whole.

As I sat on the shoulder of the roadside feeling the wind rise from the approaching storm and pondering the fate of that elegant old farmhouse that's now a home to birds and wild roses, fancifully wishing I could find a way to magically save it, perhaps by starting an Old Farmhouse Rescue League, another voice popped into my head — the one warning that what we worship, we become.

It belonged to Reverend William Sloan Coffin, the former CIA man, Yale chaplain, firebrand preacher and longtime civil rights and peace activist.

On a spring day in 1991 I found my way to his rural Vermont farmhouse door for a conversation about patriotism.

He poured me a cup of coffee and we sat down at a table in his kitchen. Lying between was the latest copy of *Time* magazine, its cover proclaiming "A Time to Savor." Just days before, the First Gulf War had officially ended and flags were flying from porches along the main street of his tidy Vermont town. Coming on the heels of the end of the so-called Cold War, America was in the grip of patriotic fever, eager to start spending what some called the country's hard-earned

"Peace Dividend" on much-needed domestic issues.

Time once called Rev. Bill Coffin "America's Last Peacenik." I asked him if he savored this time in America.

Coffin smiled and pointed out that the Japanese had actually won the Cold War and insisted that the much-publicized "peace dividend" was mostly being spent to develop new and better ways of obliterating any future enemies at the expense of America's working poor and homeless. He added that pollution was destroying our rivers and other natural resources and mentioned mindless urban sprawl that was killing small towns and obliterating the night stars.

I joked that he didn't sound much like a true patriot — more like a grumpy uncle.

The famous preacher grinned and boomed back, "On the contrary! I'm an incurable patriot! True patriots are those who carry on not a grudge fight but a lover's quarrel with their country — a reflection, if you will, of Gods' eternal lover's quarrel with the human race. The two things you must not be, as a true patriot, are a loveless critic and an uncritical lover."

He added that our history was his source of hope and patriotism. "Plato said, 'Whatever is honored in a country will be cultivated there.' My version of that is, whatever we worship we become. Unfortunately, our society worships professional athletes and better highways.

"But if you look at when this country got started as a nation, with something like just three million people, we managed to turn out Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Franklin and Adams — a list of great thinkers as long as your arm. Now, with a population eighty times as large, you have to ask yourself why we can't turn out one statesman of that caliber."

Before I could pose another question, he sipped his coffee and added, "American democracy is such a precious thing. For the moment I fear it's in grave condition. Half the population feels it's useless to vote — they feel their voices don't matter, and they're probably right. Every night 100,000 children sleep on the streets of this nation, the wealthiest in the history of the world. And 37 million Americans go to bed with no more health insurance than a fervent prayer that they will awaken in decent health in the morning."

He shook his head as we walked back out to his porch. "The gaps between the classes are widening dangerously — the very rich and the very poor are effectively seceding from America, I fear."

"So, I gather you're not really optimistic about the next twenty-five years," I prodded.

Coffin laughed. "On the contrary! I'm always an optimist. Hope is a distinctly Christian idea and America is a place founded by farming optimists! Optimism is in our DNA — and so is diversity. Patriotism should not be based on agreement. It's based on mutual concern. When hearts are one, all minds don't need to be. In a democracy, God help us if all minds are one.

"Tell you what," he declared, "come back and see me in twenty-five years and we'll both see if anything has changed for the better. What year will that be?"

"Two thousand sixteen," I said, hurriedly working out the math in my head. At that moment the year 2016 seemed light years away.

He gave me a final robust grin. "Right. This house is 200 years old and I'll only be 92. Hopefully we'll both still be here. I'll wager the roads in Vermont will be whole lot better, too."

We laughed and said goodbye.

Sadly, I never got back to Bill Coffin's farmhouse. Like a treasure from a vanishing world, America's last peacenik passed away in 2006, the year my wife and I officially moved home to North Carolina.

But I never forgot the things he told me that spring afternoon.

As I sat in a kind of reflective daze by the side of the road, a bolt of lightning hit a tree in the distance and the rain came down with a Biblical vengeance. The birds flew away and I drove on, passing a roadside notice that said the road was scheduled for widening sometime later this summer.

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@saltmagazinenc.com.

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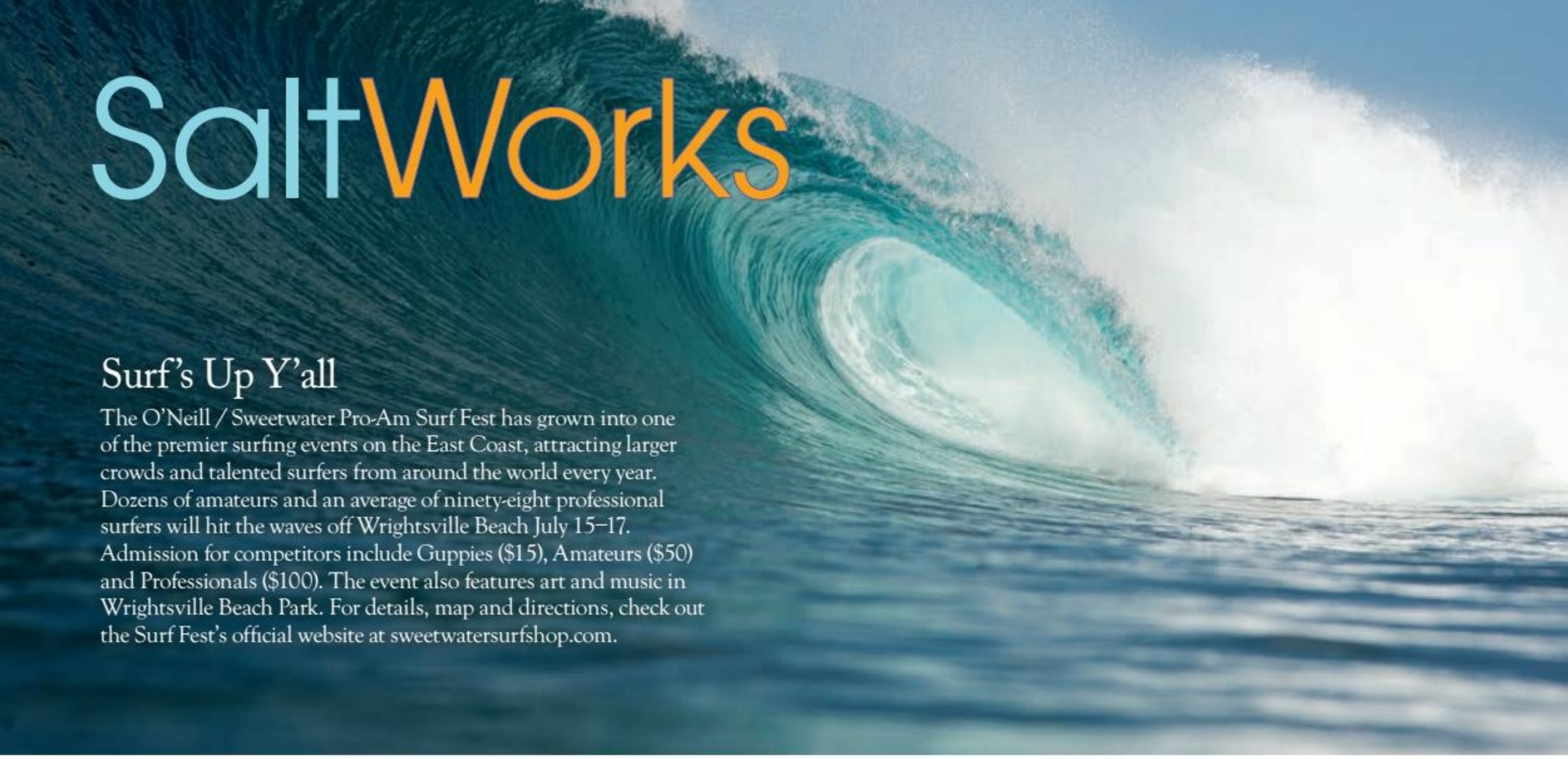

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The O'Neill / Sweetwater Pro-Am Surf Fest has grown into one of the premier surfing events on the East Coast, attracting larger crowds and talented surfers from around the world every year. Dozens of amateurs and an average of ninety-eight professional surfers will hit the waves off Wrightsville Beach July 15–17. Admission for competitors include Guppies ($15), Amateurs ($50) and Professionals ($100). The event also features art and music in Wrightsville Beach Park. For details, map and directions, check out the Surf Fest's official website at sweetwatersurfshop.com.

I Do To-Do

Before you march down the aisle and put a ring on it, there's a checklist a mile long to go through in advance of your Big Day. Where to begin? Answer: Carolina Wedding Guide's Summer Bridal Expo. Give those pre-nuptial jitters a rest from noon until 3 o'clock on July 10 at the Wilmington Convention Center (515 Nutt Street), and chat up photographers, limos, caterers, florists, ministers, hoteliers and more. Beautiful Brides of Wilmington or Camille's can give you the 411 on gowns, while Cape Fear Formal Wear and Men's Warehouse can offer tips on tuxes. And don't forget location, location, location: The Burgwin-Wright House, The Arboretum, Capt'n Bill's and a host of others will be on hand to discuss reception venues. As for entertaining your guests on off-hours? How about the Battleship North Carolina? (And please, no jokes about shotgun weddings!). Info: carolinaweddingguide.com.

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Patriot Games

The city of Southport placed its patriotic stake in the ground when it officially incorporated the NC 4th of July Festival as its very own. Draped in red, white and blue, the historic port town to our south attracts upward of 50,000 visitors to its cozy lanes to savor a televised parade, cannon fire and various wholesome games — sack races, watermelon-eating — bolstered by more than 100 local food vendors and crafts people and a boffo fireworks display after dark that claims to be the most impressive in the East. Call (910) 457-5578 or check out the festival's official website, www.nc4thofjuly.com, for more details.

Love, Honor and *Tutte*

Meaning, *Così Fan Tutte*, Mozart's comic romp and season opener for Opera Wilmington (July 29, 31 and August 5, 7; preview night July 27). Loosely translated as "Women Are Like That," or "School for Lovers," *Così* tells the story of two sisters, Dorabella and Fiordiligi, whose fidelity is put to the test when their respective soldier-lovers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, leave for war — and return in disguise. Add a mischievous maid, Despina, soaring arias (in Italian with English supertitles), elaborate costumes and you're guaranteed a good time . . . trust us! Tickets: (910) 962-3500 or opera-wilmington.org.

Ocean City Blues

The seventh edition of the Ocean City Jazz Festival brings an expanded lineup of veteran and rising jazz stars to the Crystal Coast on Saturday and Sunday, July 2 and 3. Performances begin at 5 p.m. The lineup includes acclaimed bassist and band members John Brown and Gerald Veasley, soulful songstress Ashleigh E. Smith, rocking saxophonist Tia Fuller, flute sensation Althea Rene, and Herlin Riley, the drummer from Wynton Marsalis' longtime tour band. One-day tickets are $35 ($15 for kids), two-day at $60 (and $25). One- and two-day shuttle passes from Wilmington to the North Topsail Festival site are also available for $20 and $35, respectively. For details and tickets, contact Ticket River at (888) 509-1060 or visit the festival website www.oceancityjazzfest.com.

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Surprising Sarus

Scattered across the Port City and beyond, Wilmington's own performing arts festival is a pure joy to attend – a tribute to the magic of human self-expression

By Kim Henry

Imagine a massive bird with a twelve-foot wingspan cruising along the beach at dawn, a shadow show on the wall of Bellamy Mansion, or an aerial artist suspended from the Kure Beach pier by twenty-three feet of vibrant red cloth.

That's Sarus.

This summer marks five years since Wilmington's very own performing arts festival, Sarus, began animating our urban and natural landscapes with site-specific and experimental art. So when you're strolling along the Carolina Beach boardwalk this July and come across something a little unexpected, consider yourself in the right place at the right time.

The force behind this ever-evolving creative feat is Berlin-born dancer and choreographer Karola Luttringhaus, whose dedication to diverse and ground-breaking self-expression has been a life-long passion.

"I remember going to a dance class as a child and seeing all the pink tutus and never going back!" says Luttringhaus, who is possibly the last person you would expect to find wearing anything pink. "But I did gradually discover that I was a dancer."

In 1995, Luttringhaus formed her own interdisciplinary dance company, Alban Elved, which splits its home base between Wilmington and Winston-Salem, where Luttringhaus teaches dance at Salem College. Alban Elved is the Celtic name for the fall equinox, literally translating to "the light of the water."

"Fall is my favorite season. It represents transition, the cycles of life, and has a melancholy that I relate to," explains Luttringhaus, whose impressive body of work embraces around seventy pieces of unique choreography.

In its own words, Alban Elved Dance Company "pursues the creation and presentation of innovative, multi-dimensional, original, and intellectually stimulating art experiences to fulfill some of humanity's most fundamental needs: meaningful emotional and intellectual exchange and growth, creativity, and freedom."

Freedom is definitely a recurring theme for Luttringhaus, who does not beat around the bush when it comes to expressing her ideas about how important it is for artists to explore their medium without inhibition. Her bold, open demeanor is as refreshing as the many inventive performances she brings into the public arena. "Adam-mah," for instance, is an interactive work that explores our relationship to the planet. The piece begins with two dancers swirling in real earth under stark lighting controlled by an audience responding to written instructions. In another work, Luttringhaus' movement is filmed from above, the live footage fused with animated images and projected onto a screen to form a backdrop, so that the audience is experiencing two completely different perspectives of the same movement, at the same time.

"I want to create opportunities for people to delve into the creative process without always having to worry about the outcome. I ache for more honesty in performance," declares Luttringhaus. "I want local artists to meet people from other countries, for a cultural exchange of authentic ideas and visions to happen right here in Wilmington, for Wilmington."

Having gathered dancers and artists from North Carolina to Europe, the festival is achieving this aim as an intercultural celebration of professional, eclectic artistic expression from around the globe. This year's chosen artists will create pieces inspired by the chosen themes: "Vibrations. Visions. Voices." Cameron Art Museum, UNCW and CFCC are among the many chosen venues.

This highlights another essential component of the festival — its site-specific nature, which allows performances to transcend the confines of traditional theater, transporting them to a sandy shore, a street corner, or the shores of Greenville Lake. Anywhere and everywhere are potential stages. With an avid appreciation for Wilmington's natural and urban elements, the festival utilizes the area's beauty as well as its rougher edges.

"As a set designer, to me the environment is very important and interesting, and we have a lot to work with here. When something unique is created for a specific place, it challenges people to think differently about their environment. I want people to see something they may never have seen before, in the last place they'd ever expect to see it." Luttringhaus shares her motivation for continuing to produce Sarus, despite the obvious challenges.

In true Luttringhaus style, she speaks with candor about the importance of financial backing, audience participation and the city's support. Alternative performance benefits the whole community, including children, who she strongly feels "need to be free to explore who they are and what they love" without society's regular constraints. (There is a whole area of Sarus dedicated to children.) "The Sarus Festival is an amazing gathering of bold professional talent, of brave, raw and fearlessly creative pieces of work, and in order to continue to provide art of this nature for the enrichment of both artists and audiences, we need as much financial support as possible."

Tutus and musicals are wonderful, and fortunately Wilmington has plenty of both, but diversity is decidedly the spice of life, and there's no doubt that the Sarus Festival fills a much-needed creative gap here. The fact that the arts are constantly battling funding cuts and that artists are consistently expected to provide their services for little to no money are norms that should be a wakeup call to us all. Imagine a world without any expressions of art. Now, take your child, your mom, your friend with you to relish the many gifts that the Sarus artists have created just for Wilmington.

Sarus Festival 2016 happens July 7–10. For details, visit www.sarusfestival.org.

Kim Henry moved from the mountains of southern Spain to the sandy shores of Wilmington five years ago and established her own children's theater company, Luv2act.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HARRY SCHNITZLER

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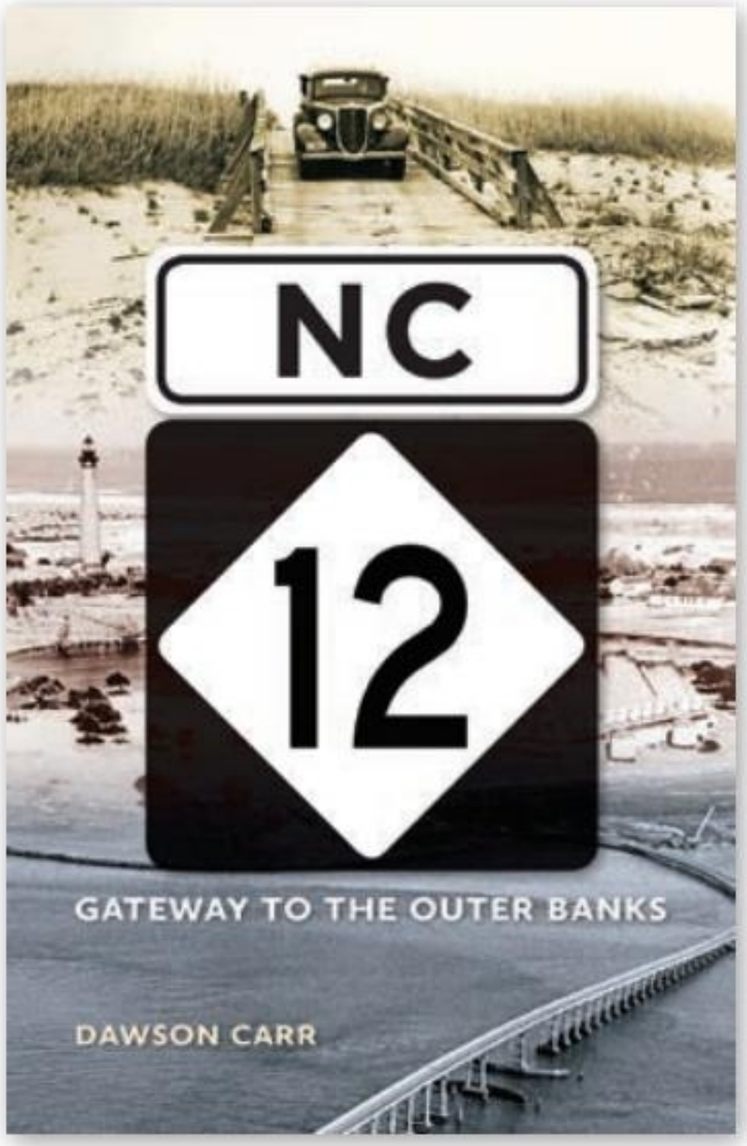
On the Road Again

A fascinating history of NC Highway 12 is essential reading for everyone heading to the Outer Banks this summer



By Stephen E. Smith

Most of North Carolina's exquisite barrier islands are accessible via a slender stretch of asphalt designated as NC 12, a roadway that's garnered more than its share of criticism and praise. NCDOT workers will tell you the road, which runs from Corolla to Ocracoke, should never have been built, while the Federal Highway Adaministration has designated NC 12 a National Scenic Byway. Repeat visitors to the Outer Banks speak of the fragile thread of macadam with the same awe and affection reserved for Rout 66 and the Blue Ridge Parkway, while environmentalists grumble about erosion and the impact of continued residential and business construction. By way of geographic and economic enlightenment, UNC Press, whose business it is to educate us on such matters, has released Dawson Carr's excellent *NC 12: Gateway to the Outer Banks*, and the book is recommended reading for anyone headed east for a sojourn on the Banks.

"New Inlet" (an ironic misnomer if there ever was one), which is located north of Rodanthe, is an example of the dilemma facing NCDOT. The inlet has appeared and disappeared numerous times over the last three centuries. It was first noted on maps in 1733 but later became clogged with sand. The inlet appears again on charts in1798 but had filled in by 1922. A new inlet was dredged in 1924 to allow fishermen to exit and enter the sound, but within a year it had clogged, only to reopen on its own in 1932. The area continued in flux, silting in and out, for the next decade, until a storm opened the inlet again in 1944, after which it refilled, until Hurricane Irene hit the coast in 2011 and washed out a hundred yards of NC 12. The difficulties of maintaining a roadway or bridge under such conditions are obvious, but with continued commercial development of the Banks and the influx of tourists, the necessity of keeping Hatteras Island and points south open to the public has become an economic imperative for the state.

Carr documents the opening of the Outer Banks, concentrating on the political and geographical challenges encountered by those who've worked to develop the area to travel and economic viability. Beginning with transport by boat and oxcart to the arrival of the Wright Brothers and the advent of the automobile, the struggle to maintain the roadway, bridges and ferries is placed in historical perspective, and the future of NC 12 is discussed in light of changing demographics and the impact of climate change.

No doubt many North Carolinians are aware, if only vaguely, of the barrier islands' history and transitory nature, but Carr offers a sobering revelation. In 1949, the U.S. military considered using the Outer Banks as a site for nuclear testing. The state was home to numerous military bases and the Banks were virtually empty, offering a cheap and safe location for "Project Nutmeg," a program for the testing of nuclear weapons. Fortunately, good sense prevailed, and the government took into consideration the historic and economic importance

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of the barrier islands and abandoned plans to nuke North Carolina. One can't help but wonder how tragic our history may have been had "Project Nutmeg" come to fruition.

According to the N.C. Department of Commerce, 11 million visitors to the Outer Banks spent roughly $4 billion in 2013 alone, but Carr is quick to point out the necessity of maintaining NC 12 as a viable highway for more than financial considerations. At work is the human need to reclaim our place in the natural world. Tourists are drawn to the beauty of sun, sky and ocean, and access to the Banks gives us a chance to swim, fish, surf or catch a glimpse of hatching sea turtles.

But allowing millions of visitors to the area has taken a toll on the natural world, and the human manipulation of the environment may in fact be a self-defeating exercise. "There is little doubt that artificial dunes keep normal waves from washing away the sand and the man-made structures that lie behind them," Carr writes, "but dunes actually change the angle at which the waves strike, giving them a more devastating punch, and the waves generated by hurricanes and nor'easters are not to be considered normal . . . Wind-driven waves have the strength to tear across the islands, wiping out cottages and parts of NC 12."

For first-time visitors to the Outer Banks, Carr's final chapter supplies a running tour of NC 12 in the fashion of early driving guides such as the *Mendenhall's Guide*: "The first cottages seen on the trip down Hatteras Island snuggle closely against the highway through Rodanthe, and just a half a mile inside the town limits, on the left side of the highway, stands the Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station Historic Site and Museum, where the first of the original lifesaving stations stood on the Outer Banks. Chicamacomico is the only U.S. lifesaving station that still exists with its original building. . ."

The ease with which we navigate NC 12, and the inspiring vistas we enjoy while doing so, tend to blind us to the fact that the Banks will always be in transition. If we're to believe the science, we should visit the area before global warming transforms the landscape. After all, a number of Pacific islands have recently disappeared due to rising sea levels and coastal erosion, and Isle de Jean Charles, Louisiana, is drowning in a salt marsh and sinking into the sea. So we might grab a copy of *NC 12: Gateway to the Outer Banks* and put the Outer Banks on our to-do list along with visiting Venice, cruising Antarctica and the Great Barrier Reef, and observing polar bears in the wild.

Stephen Smith is a poet and fiction writer who is a longtime contributor to the magazine.

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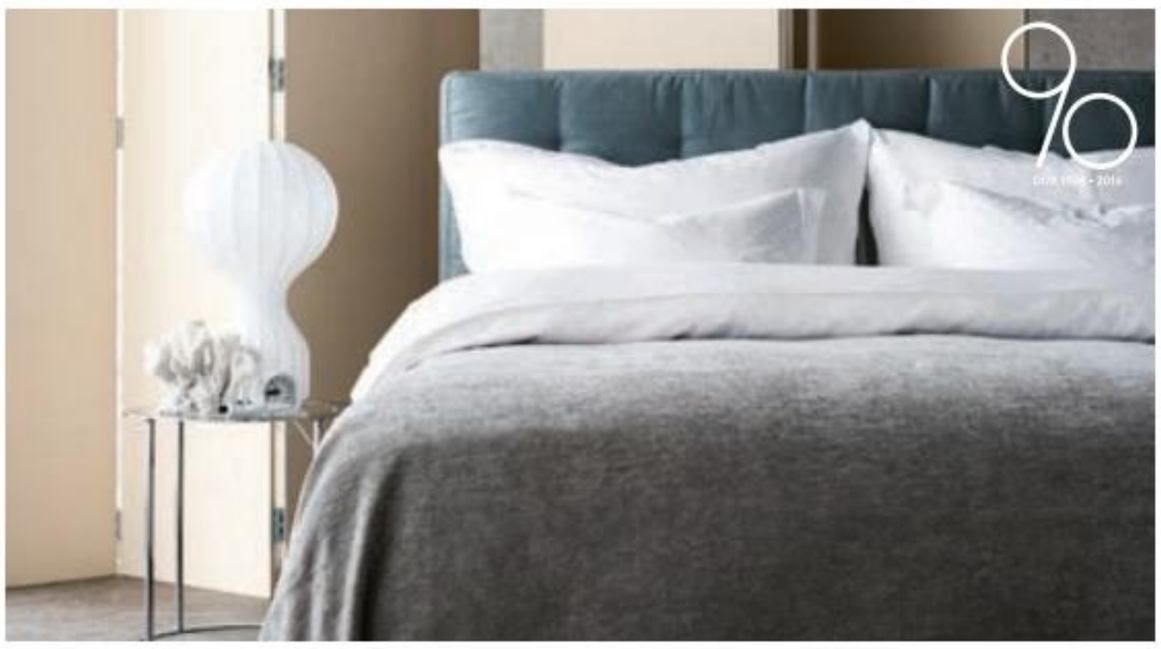

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The Evolution of an Art Director

Behind the scenes with Jonathan Guggenheim

By Gwenyfar Rohler

"The American Tall Tale has always been a through-line in all of our stuff," says Jonathan Guggenheim, who manages to keep a straight face for about five seconds before he bursts out laughing at himself.

The joke is vintage Guggenheim, a man who is so amused by the world he moves through that any conversation with him is a series of deadpan statements followed by joyful laughter — mostly at his own delivery.

In other words, he's a natural performer with his own tall tale to tell. But the "we" he is talking about is The SuperKiiids, a comedy writing/producing duo composed of Jonathan and collaborator Cory Howard. Under that moniker they wrote and produced two feature length films, an album of stage material and countless stage shows.

The first feature length film, *Lightning Salad Moving Picture*, had an unusual production process. Jonathan and Cory wrote the outline in about two days then, accompanied by their friend Kenneth Price and a movie camera, headed out to film. My bookstore was one of their locations. I expected a crew of about ten and lots of scripts getting handed around. Instead, the guys wandered through to discuss possibilities. The overwhelming number of Bill Cosby books on display caught their eyes, and the next thing anyone knew, Jonathan and Cory had a shtick that they rehearsed twice with Kenneth pacing them on the camera. They shot the scene and were gone in less than forty-five minutes. Not a single line of dialogue was written down in advance. It takes performers with a really strong background in improv to pull that off. Outside Christopher Guest movies, that is a technique that isn't successfully utilized very often.

"*Lightning Salad* was still the most fun I've had making a movie — it was just so innocent — that collective energy between Cory, Kenneth and myself and whoever else we had helping us that day," Jonathan reminisces. "As an artist or a creative type at all, I like to think that you build on your past endeavors, and the SuperKiiids were a huge part of that." He cites learning how to build almost anything with his hands for a movie prop as instrumental in the next step of his career: getting paid to work on other people's movies.

"I realized that I wanted to start shifting myself into being a real art director and learning what it takes to be a real AD. Art and design just come very natural to me. It's learning the technical aspect of art direction that I've been training and learning . . . Photoshop and Illustrator and Google SketchUp . . . drawing up engineering plans." He shakes his head and laughs. The art director is the head of the art department and is responsible for making the production designer's vision for a film into reality.

The first opportunity to work on another filmmaker's vision came in 2008 on a Sundance Lab Film called *Restless City*. Jonathan recalls finding himself the art director of a two-person art department. "It was very sensational for me. The first professional film job I had — we were getting paid $100 a week to work on it in New York City!" He lights up with all the ecstasy that the experience still holds for him.

So almost eight years into his career, what does it feel like now? "There's something very practical about making movies when you are in the AD role and it is very creative . . . I fit perfectly between practical application and being a complete daydreamer." He grins, then leans in to add, in a mock-serious stage whisper, "Making your year's salary in four to five months feels good — but it is also a very frightening thing."

In the meantime, he is still working on his own projects, the ones that keep

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

his spirit alive. About one a year seems a manageable balance with working on other people's films in order to keep home and hearth together. Last year's project, a short titled *Step-A-Head*, came from a dream about a three-headed god who wanted an art director to create a universe. At the time, Jonathan was working on *Midnight Special*, the Jeff Nichols film, but the image haunted him: a creative type forced to create under an impossible deadline. *Step-A-Head* launched onto the festival circuit in time for Jonathan to team up with Cory again to make a short titled *Pilgrims*.

Adapted from Brad Land's second book, *Pilgrims Upon the Earth*, the film comes at the perfect time: Land's breakthrough book, *Goat*, detailing horrific hazing at the hands of a fraternity, has just been adapted into a film starring James Franco and Nick Jonas. Jonathan describes *Pilgrims* as "a major departure for the SuperKiiids — incredibly depressing."

He chuckles. "Cory took the script to the UCLA screenwriting lab — then we got a grant through the South Carolina Indie Grants program for $25,000 to make a short film." Jonathan directed the film and notes that growing up in the Carolinas in the late '80s/early '90s prepared him perfectly for the project. Punk rock was starting to spread into more rural parts of the country, speaking to the anger of disaffected youth outside city centers. He tells me quite seriously that "Spartanburg, South Carolina, was quite the blossoming punk rock scene. There was plenty of anger there." I give him credit for getting that line out with a straight face, and we both break up into hysterical laughter.

Having a budget was a nice change, but all the usual problems of filmmaking were still present: scheduling, location changes, weather and exhaustion. Currently Jonathan is making his first stop-motion animated film, *Neko Kaburi*. "Neko Kaburi, the English equivalent is to be 'a wolf in sheep's clothes'. But the hilarious Japanese version is to 'wear a cat-like mask while conducting yourself in a suspicious manner'," Jonathan says, grinning. He first saw this script when he was planning a feature length live-action production. Now it has morphed into an animated short.

"I've made a couple of attempts at creating the world and the style elements that I see in the film, but this one is the closest I think to an actual Western . . . it is very similar to the opening of *Once Upon a Time in the West*." There is something very alluring to Jonathan about stop-motion animation where everything is very controlled. Weather is not an issue, actor and location scheduling ceases to concern the production team. "You just work with elements that you're given," he says with a knowing chuckle.

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.

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A Smile That Says, 'Welcome Home'

Tun Tun, case manager for Wilmington Interfaith Refugee Ministries, finds the sushi at Genki to his liking

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Dana Sachs

Here's how a family from Burma gets to Wilmington from the refugee camps along the Thai-Burmese border: First, they travel by bus to the airport in Bangkok. From there, they fly to Dubai, then Los Angeles, then Charlotte, then Wilmington.

Unless they hit a snag. A training session back at the refugee camp teaches first-time fliers how to use airplane toilets, fasten seatbelts, navigate an airport in order to find a gate. But what if they can't read English? What if they have a 30-minute connection in Charlotte and the sign that says "Terminal C" looks like gibberish?

"Some [get] lost. Some have to stay in the airport and try again the next day," says Tun Tun, who is himself a refugee from Burma. (Though the ruling junta officially changed the country's name to Myanmar in 1989, many, including Tun Tun, prefer to call it Burma.) Three years after obtaining asylum and immigrating with his family to the United States, Tun Tun now works as a case manager for the Wilmington office of Interfaith Refugee Ministries (IRM), the 20-year-old New Bern-based charitable organization that resettles newcomers in eastern North Carolina.

When a refugee family finally arrives, Tun Tun meets them at IRM and takes them to their new residence, where a "culturally appropriate" hot meal awaits them. "They are super hungry," he says. "For two or three days, they don't eat the airplane food. They don't like it."

For these families, Tun Tun — Burmese speaker, fellow member of the Karen ethnic minority community, warm presence, enthusiastic new American — serves as the bridge between their troubled past and their future here in North Carolina. With the help of teams of volunteers, many from local churches, IRM offers each family a furnished place to live, clothing, a bit of money, and education and employment assistance to help children quickly enroll in school and adults find jobs.

For many Karen refugees, who fled during decades of war with the Burmese government, their new address in Wilmington may be the first real home they've had. Tun Tun understands this. As a young medical student in Rangoon back in 1988, he became an activist in the pro-democracy movement, and was arrested and forced to serve as a porter for the government's military operations before he escaped to the jungle and eventually crossed into Thailand. Tun Tun spent the next twenty-three years — "more than half my life!" — in the Mae La refugee camp. He found purpose there. In fact, the 50,000 refugees in the camp elected him their leader, a position he held for seven years. He might never have applied for asylum at all, except that his three children needed to know the world beyond the camp. "That's why I decided to come here."

Tun Tun and I have met for lunch at Genki Sushi restaurant. Japanese cuisine has become familiar to Wilmington's Burmese community, which numbers about 300 people. Among these refugees, men usually find work

in landscaping and women in hotel housekeeping, but the most successful purchase sushi franchises in local supermarkets, then staff them with fellow Burmese. As a result of these community connections, Tun Tun is something of a sushi expert. With an array of nigiri and maki spread out in front of us, he tries a piece of crunchy lobster roll, a combination of lobster meat, asparagus, cucumber, avocado, green onion and spicy masago caviar wrapped inside pink rice paper.

"Well?" I ask.

He thinks for a moment, then responds very seriously. "I'm telling you honestly. Lobster is one of my favorite seafood, so I would say this is the most delicious I've ever had."

Traditional Karen food, Tun Tun tells me, is spicy and "very simple." A staple vegetable soup, talapaw, consists of powdered rice, fish or shrimp paste, bamboo shoots and other vegetables, plus dried deer or wild goat meat. "I miss that food," he says before confiding that Burmese immigrants have found wild bamboo shoots in the woods near High Point. That means they're making Carolina talapaw, if you will.

Mostly, these immigrants rely on rice. "Some people say to Burmese people, 'You're a rice-eating machine,'" Tun Tun says, laughing. He smears a piece of tuna nigiri with wasabi, eats it, then covers his eyes while the rush of horseradish clears his head. "Aaah! With my style — wasabi! — it tastes perfect. As far as the food I've tasted, I think sushi is the healthiest."

Genki employs a Karen refugee as a cook, and the fried rice he makes has become a customer favorite. When our dish of it appears, speckled with scallion, carrots, shrimp and fried egg, Tun Tun takes a bite. "The flavor is the same as in Burma, but we don't use carrot," he says. "Same taste. Same salt-seasoning ratio. Really good!"

In addition to the Karen refugees from Burma, the Wilmington office of IRM resettles Iraqis, Cubans, Ethiopians, Colombians and, recently,

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a growing number of Congolese. Before granting any of them asylum in the United States, the Department of Homeland Security, the State Department and the FBI put each applicant through a complex screening process to flag any potential threat. Tun Tun understands the concern, but he cautions against fearing refugees. "We are not terrorists," he says. "We have been terrorized. We run away from terrifying things."

That terror still casts a shadow on daily life. At the end of our meal, we try a piece of coconut cake and Tun Tun thinks back to Burma. "Asians use coconut in many ways."

I've spent a lot of time in Asia, so I immediately think of the coconut candy and coconut-wood chopsticks I've bought as souvenirs. "That's for sure," I reply.

But Tun Tun is thinking of something very different. "You can use coconut juice as an IV," he tells me. "In the jungle, we ran out of supplies. The patient was going to die, so the medic said, 'We have to use coconut juice.'"

Between us sits a luscious, creamy dessert. I stare at him. "What happened?"

"The patient didn't die!" His expression reflects the amazement he must have felt all those years ago, watching fruit juice bring a man to life again.

Every few weeks, Tun Tun returns to the airport to welcome a new refugee family to Wilmington. These are people who have survived the jungles, suffered war, witnessed strife, endured grief, then made the long, long journey to North Carolina. As soon as they exit security, they'll find Tun Tun waiting there, smiling. And then he'll take them home.

Genki Sushi is located at 4724 New Centre Drive, Wilmington. For more information, visit www.genkisushiwilmington.com.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington.*

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Deep-Fried Spiders

A memorable encounter with ramps and soft-shell crabs

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SHERMAN

By Jason Frye

The first time I saw a soft-shell crab sandwich I thought I would die. The legs got me. Those little legs just sticking out, hanging there, wagging. That sandwich looked like a deep-fried spider stuffed between two buns, and it was terrifying.

But it also made me wonder what was so good about a soft-shell crab. I soon found out and after devouring a spider roll (that's what I've taken to calling them), I was hooked. From the crunch to the subtle sweetness of the crabmeat, I found a new dish to love. Which is why I was so excited to have soft-shell crab over linguine with ramp pesto at Surf House in Carolina Beach a few weeks ago.

Let me set the stage: I write a lot about food. At the table with me were a trio of esteemed editors from some big Southern publications and a chef, but not just any chef, a chef who's been a James Beard Award semifinalist for Best Chef: Southeast three times. It was quite a group to eat with, and when this bowl of steaming pasta and crabs hit the table, there was an audible intake of breath.

The presentation was simple: a white bowl, a mound of pasta — bright green with the pungent pesto — surrounded by eight beautifully fried soft-shell crabs, all topped with a loose handful of fresh dill. The flavor was anything but.

There was the usual (for chefs, editors and food writers anyway) jostling for an Instagram-worthy photo and the subsequent rotation and repositioning of the plate, but after we had taken our pictures, we began forking out pasta and crabs to each of the diners.

First, a word on ramps. Ramps — a wild plant that's a sort of garlic-onion-leek hybrid — are something I grew up with in West Virginia and still get a kick out of the fact that people either, a) freak out for ramps, or b) are scared to death of them because their flavor (and smell) is rich and long-lasting. They add a great snap of flavor to any dish when used properly, and chef Craig Love definitely used them right in this dish. Their aroma was present, but subdued (you can't accuse ramps of being subtle), and the flavor was spot on as it overwhelmed neither the sweet crab nor delicate flavor of the pasta.

Now a word on soft-shell crabs. I'm not the only one who has had an alarmed reaction to a soft-shelled crab, and, let's face it, like them or not, they're a little creepy looking, a little like deep-fried spiders. But these were flawless. Thick and meaty, coated with the ideal amount of breading, and cooked to the perfect point of doneness. Each bite had the right flavor and had the right texture — a little crunch, a little toothsome chew.

All evening, our group had been drinking cocktails, having oyster shooters, talking about every dish and having impromptu contests to see who's photo of the Redneck Picnic charcuterie tray could get the most likes on Instagram, but when this dish arrived, we all quieted down and ate, which is the ultimate compliment to the dish and to the chef.

Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of Moon North Carolina *and* Moon NC Coast. *He's a barbecue judge, he rarely naps, and he's always on the road. Keep up with his travels at tarheeltourist.com.*

Ancient Fears

The face of the Great Sphinx and a sandstorm of the mind lead to a journey into the past

By Jennifer Chapis

One second I was sinking comfortably into my ivory-cushioned couch in downtown Wilmington. The next second, I was gone.

After decades of jaw pain, I'd decided to try hypnotherapy to remedy my TMJ. No, the hypnotherapist did not swing a pocket watch before my eyes. She guided me into a relaxed state using simple breathing.

"Take us to the time that explains why you clench your teeth," she directed my subconscious mind. "Three, two, one . . . "

And just like that, I time-traveled to 1974.

I felt aware of myself as a woman breathing with eyes closed in 2010. Yet, I simultaneously felt my tiny 3-year-old legs struggling to keep up as my father dragged me by the hand, hurrying through a parking lot. This was more sensation than memory. My whole toddler-sized body felt like a frightened pounding heart, something I had not remembered until now.

"What do you see?" asked the hypnotherapist.

"I see a building ahead." For some reason, the enormous department store against the sky panicked my child-self.

"Why are you so scared?" she asked serenely.

"Walking into the wind, can't breathe," I whined.

"Inhale gently."

I took a breath. My brain's vice grip relaxed.

"Take us to an earlier scene that explains your fear."

Golden orange light occupied my entire field of vision. For a second, everything felt divine. Then, out of nowhere, wind blew dust down my throat. This was no two-dimensional vision, like watching an image on a screen. I was having the full-body experience of being in a desert sand storm.

"The wind is suffocating," I shouted.

"Do you want to stop?"

"I'm fine."

At first I could see only an eye, outlined in black like Cleopatra's cat-eye. Then I realized I was glaring up at an enormous statue. Head of a man, body of a crouching lion. A sphinx! Electrifying terror shot through me when I saw its gold and black striped headdress against the sky, big as a building.

"Imagine a transparent safety shield around you," she said. "Nothing can harm you."

I opened my mouth, but my voice had disappeared. This was not any place I'd ever been.

"Where are you?" she asked.

"Something tells me it's ancient Egypt," I whispered.

Soon after the mysterious treasure hunt into my psyche, I asked my stepfather to Google sphinxes. I wanted to know if the sphinx I saw actually existed. But I was too afraid to look myself.

Since childhood, I'd been afraid of Egyptian imagery. But it made no sense why pharaohs and pyramids gave me the creeps. Two sphinx statues had guarded a friend's Brooklyn brownstone home. What if looking at an inanimate object gave it power to come alive? I'd ring her buzzer with eyes closed, holding my breath until she unlocked the door and I leapt like a jackrabbit to safety.

"Did it have wings?" Dad asked.

"No," I said, peeping out the corner of one eye. "That's not it."

I was not so much frightened of the Sphinx itself. I was afraid to see evidence of its existence. What would that mean if the statue from my vision actually existed? The sphinx had scared me because it was so real.

"How about this one?"

I screamed at the sight of it. The color of sun-bleached limestone, this mammoth sphinx with reclined body and paws extending forward was not brightly painted like the image in my vision. Yet, its face felt hauntingly familiar.

Years passed, and, after the help of meditation, I could do sphinx pose in yoga class without getting nauseated.

Then one day a reproduction of the Great Sphinx randomly flashed its colorful face on my laptop screen during an unrelated search. In black, gold, red and blue, it resembled my vision. Egyptologists believed that, in ancient times, the Sphinx was originally painted in brilliant hues. I was stunned to learn that archaeologists had discovered traces of pigment near its ear, despite having

PHOTOGRAPH BY JENNIFER CHAPIS

been ravaged by thousands of years of erosion, destruction and pollution.

In March 2016, I surprised myself. Ready to face the Sphinx, I booked a two-day flight to Cairo.

"Although no one knows for sure when it was built, the Sphinx was likely constructed sometime between 2558 and 2532 BC during the reign of Pharaoh Khafra," explained the guide. "The monument probably served to beautify the valley and guard the pyramids."

With the pyramids towering around us, the sandy Giza plateau felt like another planet. The Sphinx was only feet away, but stone ruins blocked our view. I was so close! I ran my fingers over a palm-sized sphinx statue I would carry home for my stepdad, to thank him for helping me when I was scared.

"Sphinx, أبو الهول in Arabic, means The Terrifying One. Egyptians later associated the Sphinx with the sun god, naming it Horus of the Horizon." The guide provided fascinating facts but I could barely listen. The Sphinx was pulling me to it like a mighty magnet.

"Historians say the nose was chiseled off in an act of vandalism around 1378 AD," he continued. I'd avoided the Sphinx all my life. Now I just wanted to see it! When he finally stopped talking, I dashed ahead of the group. We'd been warned that wandering alone was unsafe for Western women, but I didn't care.

The second the Sphinx came into view, I started sobbing. To me, it was more magnificent than the Great Pyramid, the Roman Coliseum, Stonehenge, and the Grand Canyon combined. I stood staring up at its mind-blowing image, imagining the extensions at the sides of its head painted in black and gold stripes of the royal headcloth. Like the Sphinx buried in sand for thousands of years, there are mysteries buried inside us all. I didn't know why I was crying, but I felt the pain of thousands of people over the millennia releasing.

"I've felt connected to this land all my life," said a Danish woman I met on my tour.

"Me too," I told her. Side-by-side we snapped photos. She felt oddly familiar. Like me, she was also an intuitive healer.

"We've been here before." She breathed into a linen scarf, the air thick with dust.

Why was I panicked that windy day in the parking lot? Because I knew my biological father would leave me. I started clenching my jaw as a preschooler because I feared a reality I had seen but couldn't talk about.

"I'm grateful there's no sand storm this time," I smiled, without a worry.

"Me too," she nodded.

Jennifer Chapis leads group energy clearing meditations and Writing for Healing workshops in Wilmington. Find her at Jennifer@AllLoveHealing.com.

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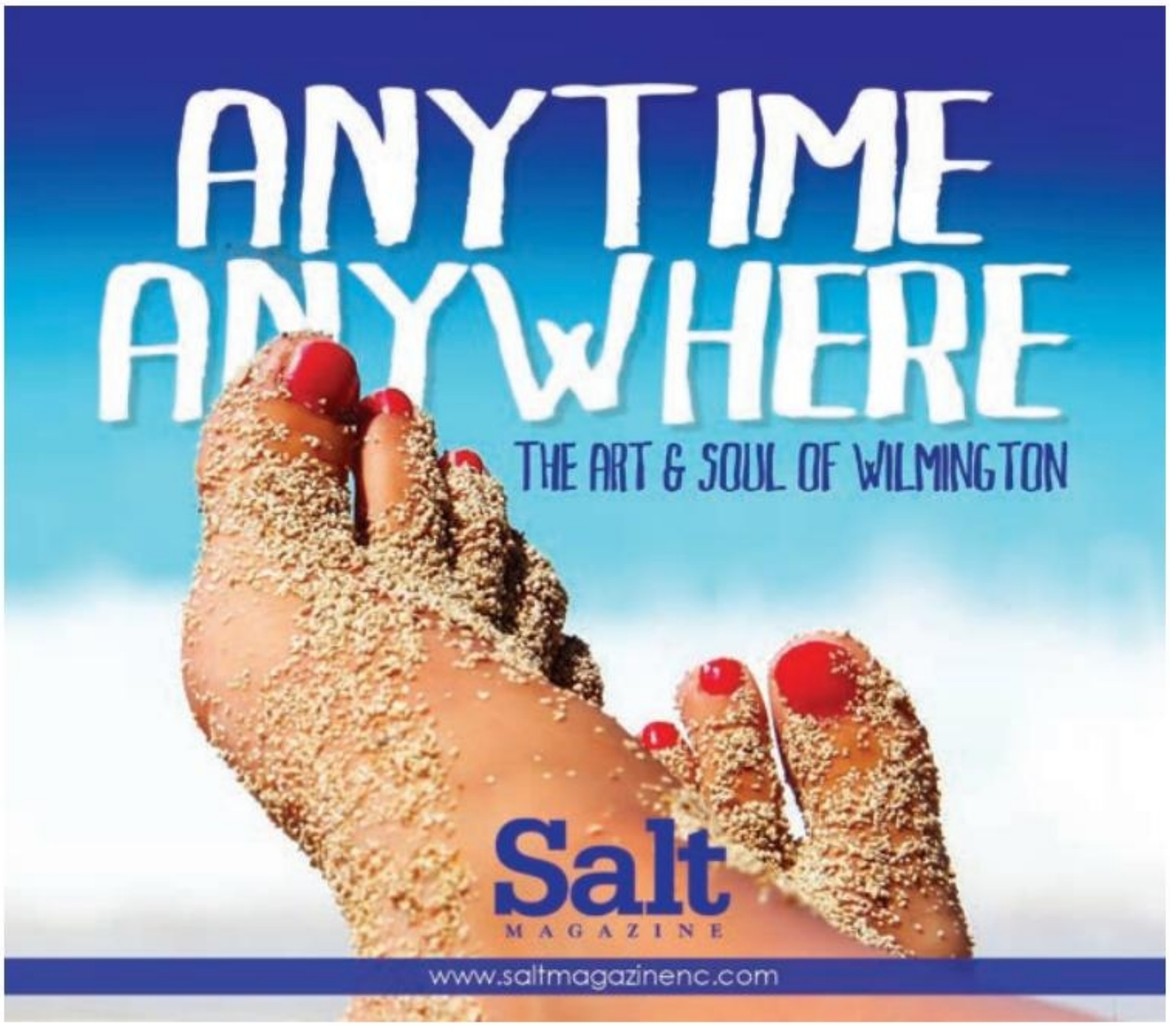

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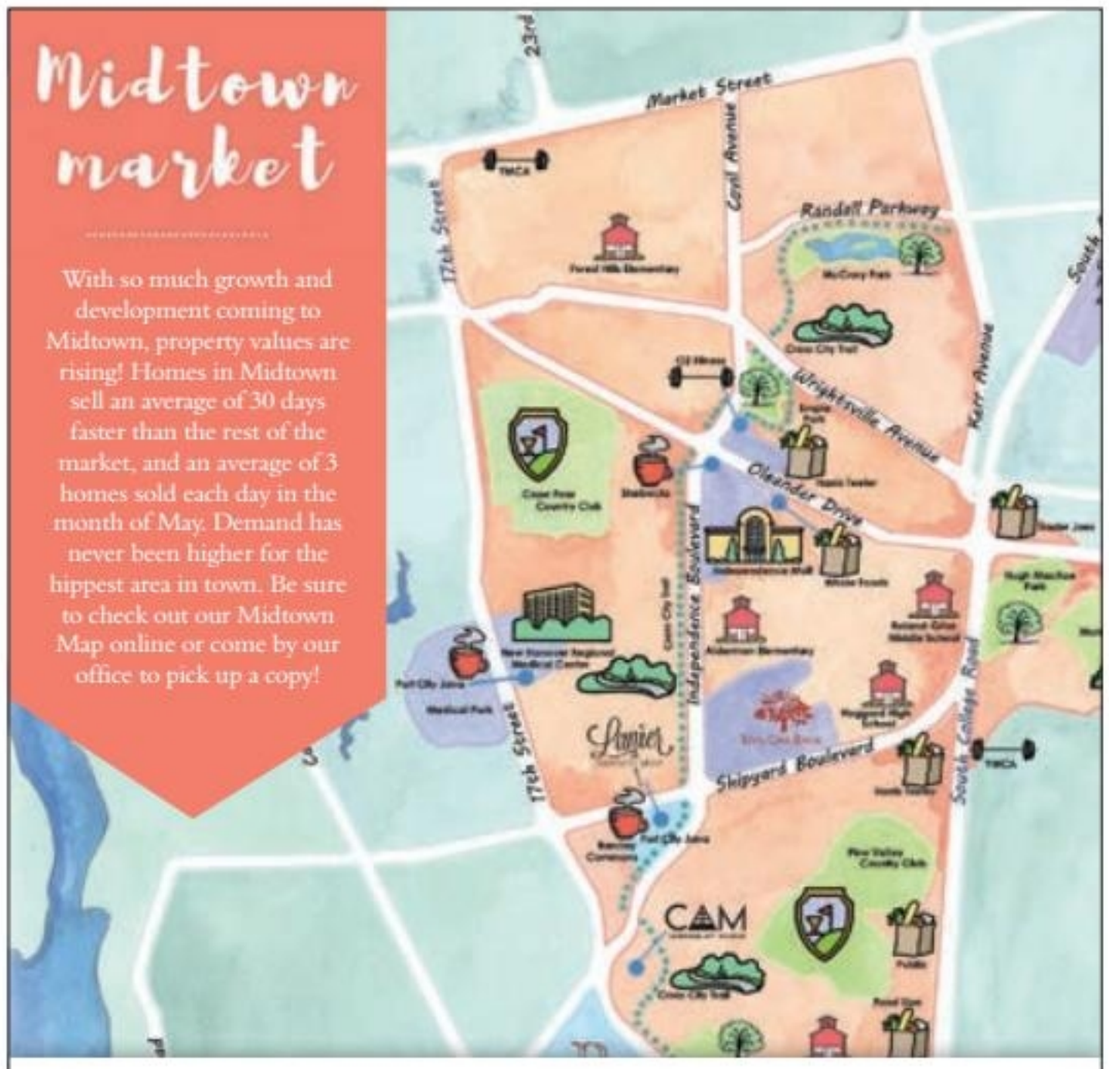

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Blended Family

Daiquiris à la Borden

By Jane Borden

Shakespeare borrowed storylines from popular narratives for most of his plays. The ancient Hebrews relied on local oral traditions for much of the Old Testament, including the Moses story, which is so indelible that 2,500 years later the lead character has transformed into, more or less, Harry Potter, and launched a $15 billion franchise. Similarly, my father did not invent the daiquiri. But his is still an exquisite work of art that could put Greensboro on the map. And, like the aforementioned works, his drink strays from its source material in ways that, via comparison, tell more about the artist and his time than a wholly original work could. Below, are three recipes in context.

Daiquiri, Jennings Cox (sometime between 1898– 1909)

Juice of 6 limes

6 teaspoons sugar

6 Bacardi cups, Carta Blanca rum

2 small cups mineral water

Crushed ice

"Put all ingredients in a cocktail shaker and shake well. Do not strain as the glass may be served with some ice."

Basically, it's a rum sour; Cox's drink relied on a popular contemporary blueprint. Further, the Ti Punch, Caipirinha and Medford Sour all predate the daiquiri and employ some kind of cane spirit, lemon or lime, and sugar. Also, in the mid-to-late-18th century, British Navy sailors were issued a grog of rum mixed with water, lime and sugar. But since Cox, a mining engineer in Cuba at the turn of the 20th century, was the first to record a specific recipe and give it a special name, he is credited as creating it.

One story: He was throwing a party, ran out of gin and didn't want to serve his guests the local rum straight. Another story: Before heading to the mine, he and his coworkers began each day with several of these drinks at a local bar. A third story: He and a buddy were experimenting one night, et voilà. Whatever its origin, it was named for Playa Daiquiri, where the mine was located.

Cox chose Bacardi Carta Blanca because it was local and, mostly, because U.S. engineers in Cuba received a monthly ration of it.

He used limes instead of lemons (the more typical choice for a classic sour), because they were ubiquitous in Cuba.

And he used six cups of rum for a recipe serving six, because he was a crazy alcoholic. Or because, in 1900, they all were. Or because they were just drunk all the time, which may be why the British Navy never really held Cuba. Alternately, some believe the phrase "Bacardi cups" on Cox's handwritten recipe actually means ounces of the liquor. A medium lime produces about an ounce of juice, and the limes growing wild in Cuba were surely much smaller, so these proportions make a little more sense, but would still produce a pretty sour product. Either way, the Royal Navy has no excuse.

Libation Point Peach Daiquiri, Bob Borden (the 1990s)

2 & 1/2 large peaches

6 ounces Bacardi light rum

4 ounces frozen lemonade concentrate

2 ounces pineapple juice

Cubed ice

Peel and pit the peaches and throw them into a standard-size blender. Add the liquid ingredients. Fill to the top with ice. Blend.

The frozen daiquiri was also developed in Cuba, around Hemingway's time, when a bartender began using crushed ice. The invention of the blender, shortly thereafter, pulverized ice faster and more easily. This process turned the drink into the slushy variety that swept America after the

ILLUSTRATION BY MERIDITH MARTENS

rise in popularity of rum (which happened when World War II grain rations reduced the production of whiskey and beer).

In the 1960s, Dad and his first cousin Donnie had a boat named *The After You 2*. When they asked dates to join them on an outing, they'd joke, "We named the boat after you two." It was a 34-foot Hatteras and had a generator. They'd motor to Cape Lookout with three or four couples, fish along the way, and then swim inside the hook, while Herb Albert & the Tijuana Brass played on the 8-track tape deck. Dad hooked the blender up to the generator and made banana daiquiris, using ice from the cooler — "preferably the ice that had not been on the fish," he clarifies. As Dad describes it, the drink was sweeter and less delicate than the peach variety he landed on forty years later, although I'm sure they were appreciated at the time.

Dad resurrected this drink with peaches because he was receiving free peaches. My Uncle Ed still sends us a case each summer of Mac's Pride peaches from South Carolina (the best I've had on the East Coast). Every year we budget them out: some for Mom's cobbler, some for eating and some for Dad's daiquiris. They are precious globes, nature's gold, so revered that even my nephews have not noticed or pointed out that each one resembles a tiny butt.

Dad boils the peaches for thirty seconds before peeling them, to loosen the skins. Peeling them otherwise was too time-consuming because, being both frugal and fastidious, he won't allow his knife to remove any flesh with the skin. You should see him peel a tomato. Depending on your perspective, it is either a noble feat or a special disease.

Dad begins making his peach daiquiris around 4:30 p.m., because that is common sense.

He stuck with the frozen lemonade mix, because it's just so easy. He lessens the amount, though, as too much acid would overpower the peach. But then he adds pineapple juice, his secret ingredient, to keep up the sugar content. He sometimes returns to dessert buffets for thirds.

Dad serves his daiquiris in plastic insulated glasses because they are typically drunk on our porch in Morehead City, which faces the Sound and receives a fair amount of drink-melting wind. This porch was named Libation Point by my grandmother, but honestly anywhere you drink a daiquiri this good, it will be a point of libation. And you could probably forgo the insulated glassware because the drink won't remain in your glass very long.

Dad was only able to perfect this recipe with, as he explains, "Years and years of diligent experimentation — and I had to taste every single one of them."

Frozen Watermelon Daiquiri, Jane Borden (the Aughts)

12 generous counts (6 ounces?) of Bacardi light rum (or a mid-shelf vodka)

2 big spoonfuls (soup spoon?) of frozen limeade (or lemonade) concentrate

couple of handfuls of cubed ice (1 heaping cup?)

Frozen, chunked watermelon (enough to fill the blender)

Cut a seedless watermelon (into pieces about half of the size of your fist?) and freeze them twenty-four hours in advance.

Add the liquid ingredients. Add the ice. Fill to the top with watermelon. Blend.

Most blender drinks today are made with synthetic fruit syrups and too much of them. So when friends in New York tried one of mine, they were pleasantly surprised and usually asked, "Where did you learn to make these?" "My dad," I'd reply. This response was usually met with polite silence, presumably because family traditions in other parts of the country don't revolve around liquor. Regardless of their judgments, they always wanted refills.

My friends and I often threw summer barbecues. I was in charge of the blender. Good peaches are hard to find in New York, so I worked with what

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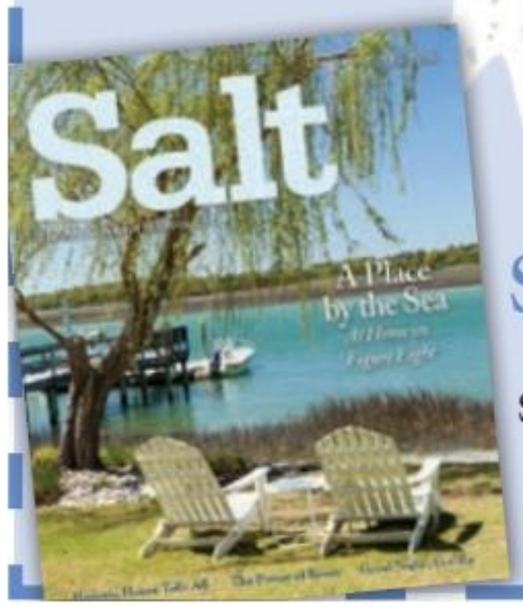

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I had: mango and strawberries in margaritas, cherries and mint in mojitos, banana and pineapple in piña coladas. But I always wanted to do something with watermelon. I tried using a little, but the subtle flavors disappeared. Then I tried adding a lot, but its water content is too high for the finished product to remain frozen. Finally, I realized that freezing the melon in advance, and using it as the ice, would solve both problems. This new drink quickly became the most popular on my bill.

Dad said Donnie once tried to put watermelon in the blender on the *After You 2*, but had failed to remove the seeds. "We spent the next hour spitting out little black bits," he recalls. "We only did that once."

Although I personally prefer rum, sometimes I replace it with vodka so the watermelon can shine even more. But I guess that's not a daiquiri. Then again, when I put bourbon, Bailey's, vanilla ice cream and ice in a blender for dessert, that's not a daiquiri either, but it's still delicious.

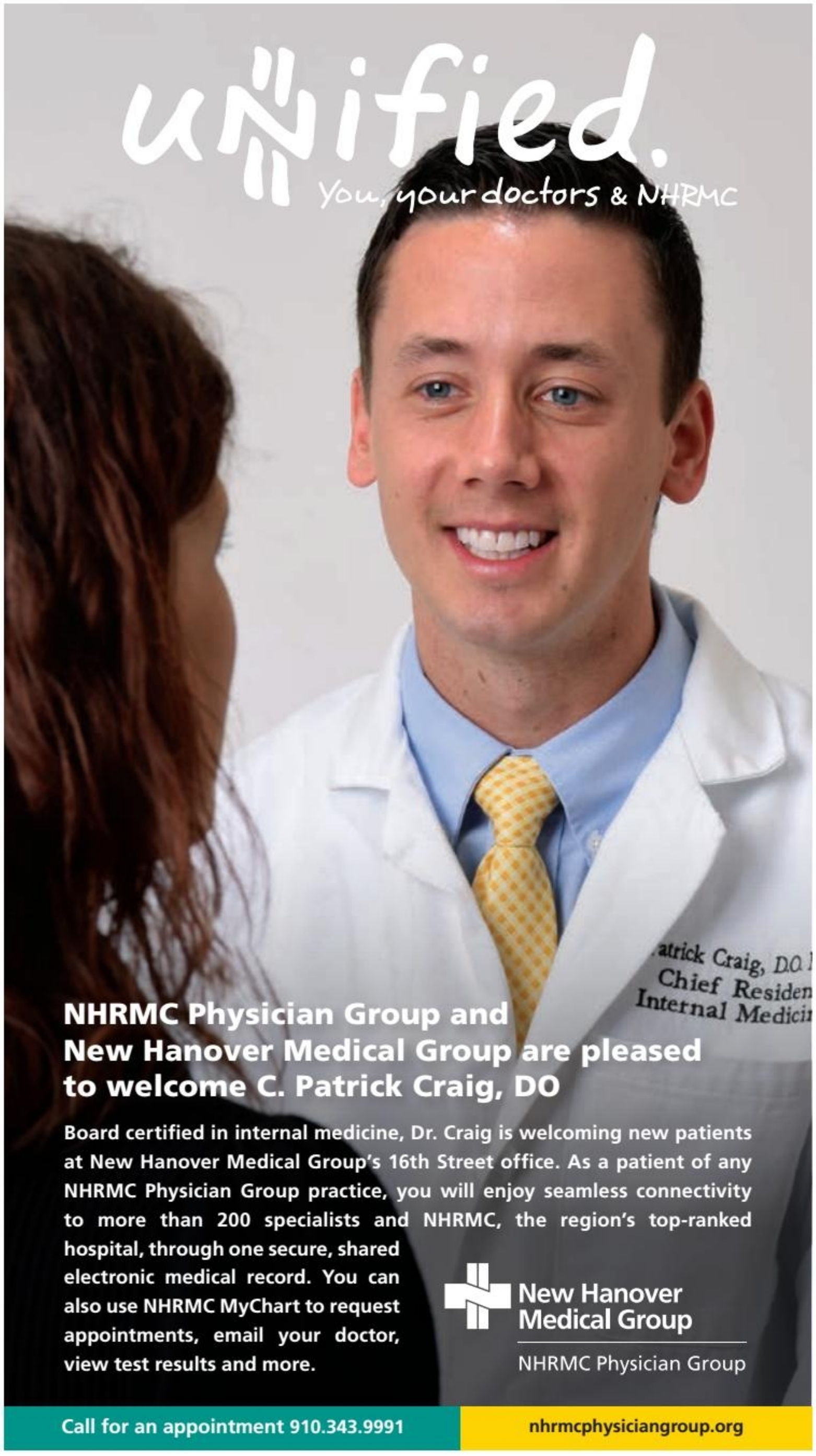
I cut back on the citrus concentrate because, again, it overpowers the melon. Also, since the drink contains more fruit (even if 92 percent of it is water), it requires less sugar.

Sometimes people like mint. Since it blends thoroughly, two or three leaves will do. As a purist, I don't think the drink needs it, but, hell, go crazy.

I apologize for the recipe's vagueness. When working with a blender, it's easy to correct mistakes. So I just eyeball the ingredients and add more of whatever is needed, as I go (my recipes have also been influenced by my mother). Another tip: Run the blender a long time. Eventually, a tornado-like funnel will appear at the top. Once that happens, run it for another minute, at least. Never serve a chunky frozen daiquiri. Also, if you find that the bottom half is blending, but the top half won't budge, just stop it, give it a stir, and blend again.

Like my father's daiquiri, I have perfected this recipe over many years. Eventually, I felt ready to serve him one. Every apprentice dreams of impressing his or her mentor. But opportunities are rare, particularly in my case, because if a blender is on the counter, and my father is in the building, everyone would prefer he make the drinks. A couple of summers ago, I finally convinced the family to let me serve one round. They unanimously agreed it was delicious. Then they unanimously agreed they prefer Dad's peach variety. Frankly, I agree. My endeavor wasn't intended to be a competition. That's why I don't make peach daiquiris. It's Dad's world, I just blend in it. Next time, I'll tell you about his Old Fashioneds.

Jane Borden is a Greensboro native living in Los Angeles and trying to spread the gospel of good daiquiris.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Fly Fishing for Reds

Going after the fabled puppy drum on a rising tide

By Rip Woodin

There is no vaccine for this fever. It inflames the left side of the brain where desire usually lies dormant. It ruins a golf swing, empties a wallet, strains a marriage and makes friends ask, "Where have you been?" The scientific name is sciaenops ocellatus flyitis, known in the vernacular as stalking tailing red fish with a fly rod.

This is not a prissy, preppy production with a genteel flyfisher standing in a mountain stream carefully casting a No. 20 midge to a 9-inch rainbow trout 15 feet away sipping those microscopic flies. This is saltwater warfare where the combatant crouches on the front deck of a skinny water skiff poled through flooded spartina grass by a guide perched high atop a platform rising above the raised outboard engine. Both angler and guide scan the foot-deep marsh for a quick wave of a triangular tail the size of a man's hand that gives away a 25-inch red fish on the hunt for dinner.

Red fish — puppy drum in North Carolina or spot tail bass in the South Carolina Lowcountry — don't sip their food. They burrow, root or greedily gobble crustaceous morsels in the shallow water of the marsh grass as a high tide aided by the pull of a new or full moon floods an otherwise muddy flat. Tiny crabs, shrimp, baitfish and anything else that swims or crawls are on the menu. The all-you-can-eat buffet is open for a scant three-to four-hour period when the tide floods a flat, crests, then recedes. The fish don't need a printed invitation; they come onto the flat from deeper channels as the tide rises, then pull back to safety as the water ebbs. The reds go from happy diners to nervous guests eager to leave once the tide begins to recede. A greedy red that delays its exit too long becomes dinner for an osprey or the crabs it was recently eating.

. . . suddenly the line is tight and the reel is buzzing as the fish heads for the next ZIP code.

The slanting sun flicks off the red gold scales as the 7-to 10-pound fish prowls back and forth, happy in this estuarine dining room just off the Intracoastal Waterway north of Morehead City. The black spot cleverly positioned on the red's tail by Mother Nature as a bit of camouflage winks at the angler now stripping line off his eight-weight rod. "Ten o'clock, 60-feet," Gordon Churchill hisses from the platform that gives him a better perspective to see feeding fish.

"Got him," I reply, the rush beginning to spread through me. Churchill and I have been through this dance many times. The excitement never stops. Slow down, I think. "One false cast, now shoot the line," I tell myself. The crabby-looking fly, tied from deer hair, a chartreuse feather and a few strands of sparkling flash, drops two feet from the fish's tail.

"Wrong end, stupid," says Churchill, tapping my shoulder with the long pole to reinforce his order. "Go again, now. He's moving left."

I make a few quick strips to pull in some line, then lift the line off the water, and wait a count or two for the loop to unroll behind the skiff. My arm moves forward and with a quick tug on the line, it shoots toward the fish and left. Only the red fish turned right in his unpredictable grazing.

"Dammit, dammit!" I say as I feel panic replacing anticipation. I cast again, hoping the fish will turn back to the left. He does! The fly lands four feet in front of the fish, slowly finning forward.

"Let it sit," Churchill commands. The fish moves closer. "Now twitch it, one bump. He sees it. Short strip." The instructions come sharply, one right after another.

I am saying, "Strip strike, strip strike" over and over to myself to avoid the traditional rod lift used in freshwater to hook a trout. Anxiously raising the rod tip guarantees you'll miss a red fish either by pulling the fly out of its under-slung mouth or popping the 12-pound tippet when hooking a brick with gills.

The splash is like a bowling ball hitting the water as the fish sucks in the fly. My mouth drops open but I don't lift the rod and suddenly the line is tight and the reel is buzzing as the fish heads for the next ZIP code. I remember to look down to ensure I'm not standing on any loose fly line, which would guarantee a breakoff. I feel the smile as I exhale and begin to fight the fish.

Hunting tailers is not about putting up numbers on the scoreboard. For quantity, go troll for Spanish mackerel or blue fish. One red fish is OK, two is good and three or four is a great day. The hunt is the same and the game is the thrill. The coastal marshes from Morehead City to south of Wilmington don't have the most fish like Florida, and they don't have the biggest fish like Louisiana, but the game is as good as it gets anywhere.

Ride with Seth Vernon as he fishes the byzantine marshes around Wilmington. He's one of the top light tackle guides in the area and has even made a slick DVD called *Redfish Can't Jump* that's a video essay about the game of red fishing. On a late summer afternoon, he launches his Beavertail skiff into two feet of water quickly throttling up on plane. Someone who pilots a boat through twisting channels only a foot deep at 30 miles per hour is either crazy or an expert who knows the marsh like a dark room in a house. Vernon is the latter.

"There are 40,000 acres of marsh from Topsail Island to Fort Fisher," he explains, "but only 10 percent of that is really great fishing." There is less river influence on marshes in the Wilmington area so the water is clearer than in Morehead City, Vernon said. With higher tides, the flats are flooded more often than farther north, so there are more reds in the cafeteria line.

Fish need entrances and exits to the flats from deeper water where they hold during low tide, Vernon continued with his lecture. But it can't be too deep or else marauding bottlenose dolphin from the Intracoastal Waterway will find their favorite dinner entrée. Water has to cover the marsh regularly enough to create a nursery for crabs the size of a dime, small shrimp and baitfish that need the cover of grass to hide from something bigger.

There are myriad challenges. "It's hard, precise fishing because you've got to hit a small target the size of a platter with a heavily weighted fly that has to get down quickly in the grass," Vernon continues. As the leader pulls across the grass, it lifts the fly up, which is an unnatural movement for a crab. "Also, there is usually wind to deal with," he adds, that makes casting accurately problematic.

Red fish turn on differently every day since the tide change advances an hour daily. Some days, it's early but it can also happen late, at dusk. A flat can be empty one minute, then suddenly have five fish tailing in a backyard-sized area. A "happy" fish doesn't feel threatened by receding water or predators so it moves back and forth, tipping down to suck in a crustacean delicacy off the bottom. That's when the bronze tail waves like a flag in a soft breeze signaling the stalk is on. A red fish spooked by an errant fly or even a fly line in the air overhead will either freeze for a moment or blow out of the area leaving a V-wake like a nuclear submarine.

Some flats are hard and easily waded in shorts and old sneakers. A pale gray-brown area without grass generally means the bottom is soft pluff mud that can suck a tightly tied shoe right off a foot or worse, trap a careless wader up to the thighs, inducing heart-pounding panic until swimming free of this coastal quicksand. The best idea is to stay in the skiff until the guide says to wade.

Guiding is not an easy way to earn a living, and only the best survive. Paying

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RIP WOODIN

attention to detail separates guides from captains who just "take you fishing." Vernon has guided clients from Bristol Bay in Alaska to Ascension Bay in the Yucatan along with the obligatory Western trout stops in between. He constantly passes on bits of fishing wisdom that aren't usually found in how-to books but learned only through spending ten months a year on the water.

Fish like to feed into the wind or into the tide, whichever is heavier, he explains. That bit of knowledge helps him determine a direction to take once he pulls up the engine and climbs on the poling platform. It's easier for a right-handed angler to work a fish that's moving from right to left, Vernon continues.

"Cast while the tail is up, when the fish can't see your fly," he says, catching sight of a fish fifty yards away, but invisible to me. "If you don't see the tail, don't cast. The fish can see your line or the fly can land on him and spook him." The instructions keep coming. Don't cast past the fish then strip the line because it's unnatural for a crab to swim toward something that's going to eat it, Vernon warns. "It doesn't look right to the fish."

With all those thoughts rattling around underneath my lucky fishing hat, I know I still have to cast 50 to 60 feet in a crosswind and drop the fly in a circle the size of a hula-hoop. "Go ahead," Vernon says. I rush my cast and am well off the mark. In haste, I try to haul too much line off the marsh, and it snags a tall piece of grass behind the boat. The red disappears. And so it goes with the next seven or eight chances at feeding fish. My smooth cast has deserted me; my arms flail the air as if receiving electric shocks.

Even though I'm not facing him, Vernon knows my face is red with embarrassment, so he graciously changes the subject to fish conservation, something we both work toward as volunteers for the Coastal Conservation Association of North Carolina. I watch the sun fade and color begins to drop out of my face. It's just fishing, I tell myself.

If you want to go:

- Some experience with a fly rod is required, so practice in your yard or on the beach casting in different wind conditions.
- Although most guides have equipment for their clients, an eight-weight rod, Redfish floating line on a disc drag reel with 125 yards of Dacron backing is the ideal equipment. Add a 9-foot, 12- to 16-pound leader with a few crab or shrimp flies and you're ready.
- Never fly fished? Look for classes at retail stores like Orvis or Great Outdoor Provision Co. Trout Unlimited chapters and the Federation of Fly Fishermen also offer instruction.
- Two of many guide sites are www.doublehaul-guideservice.com (Wilmington) and www.waterdogguideservice.com (Beaufort).

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Barn Swallow

The showy, acrobatic fliers of summer

By Susan Campbell

The barn swallow is unquestionably the showiest of all the swallows in North Carolina. They're also the most widespread species of swallow in the world. In the Eastern Hemisphere, they breed across much of the United States. They winter from southern Mexico throughout Central and South America.

During summer months, these acrobatic fliers are a common sight. With their iridescent cobalt blue heads, backs and wings, male and female barn swallows are similar in appearance: cream-colored bellies, chestnut-colored underparts, neck, throat and forehead. The black tail is long and forked, with white spots on the inner webs. Males have longer streamers and tend to have darker faces than females. The males with the longest tails in a population will breed sooner and perhaps have more than one mate in a season.

Although they historically nested in caves, today these communal breeders almost exclusively use man-made structures (old buildings, bridges, porch overhangs — even pontoon boats). Thick, cup-shaped nests composed of mud pellets and grass stems are built by both male and female, attached directly to a vertical wall or object (bolt, wire, wasp nest, etc.) protruding from a wall. A lining of soft grasses and feathers is added for the three to five eggs, then both parents incubate and tend to the nestlings. They are a species that will reuse nests from prior seasons as well. The increase in suitable nesting substrates as a result of human activity has certainly had a positive effect on the barn swallow.

Even though they do not frequent feeders or bird baths, barn swallows may congregate in large numbers when they find an abundant source of large insects. This is often over open water but may also include ball fields and golf courses — and certainly agricultural areas. Adjacent to such habitat, you may spot these swallows perched together in dead trees or along power lines. During migration, barns are often found mixed in with other types of swallows, and flocks easily number in the hundreds as they make their way south in the fall.

Swallows as a group are not well-known songsters, but they do use a unique array of sounds to communicate, everything from chirps and whistles to twitters and long warbles. They may sing virtually anywhere and at any time. If one knows what to listen for, the species is commonly heard overhead during breeding season and migration.

Susan would love to hear from you. Feel free to send questions or wildlife observations to susan@ncaves.com.

Granddaddy's Anvil

Memories of a family patriarch whose strength carries down to this day

By Phillis Thompson

The 150-mile stretch of rich black loam from Memphis to Vicksburg was born of the river's passion. For centuries, the Mississippi violated the land in a spring ritual of release and rebirth. The rich river silt left by the withdrawing water grew layer upon layer until the land became a fruitful plain. The people call this land the Mississippi Delta.

On the land cotton is king, and those who own the land have owned it for generations. Those who work it are the poor. So it has always been, and so it was at the turn of the century when my grandfather followed the winding river south from Illinois to the Delta with his parents and sisters. At 20, he'd had enough of farming and decided he would no longer be tied to the land.

Granddaddy was a jack-of-all trades. After an apprenticeship with a blacksmith, he established his own smithy. Most plantations had an anvil and forge, so Granddaddy made the rounds with his hammers, apron and tools. There were always horses and mules to shoe, and occasionally a planter wanted some wrought-iron work done at the house.

Sweating over a fiery forge, swinging a heavy hammer and wrestling mules made a man strong. In his prime, no one could beat Granddaddy at arm wrestling. He was proud and rightly so. He came as a stranger to the Delta, made a name for himself, and provided a good living for his wife and two sons.

His wife, Clara, was queen in his home. Although she died some twenty years before him, he never got over it. He used to take the photo album from the shelf and show the old pictures to visitors, especially children.

"This is my Clara," he would say. "Isn't she beautiful?"

And as the tears dulled the sparkle of his blue eyes, the visitors would readily agree while peering at the yellowed photographs of a short, round woman in long dress and white apron.

After Clara's death, one son moved away. Granddaddy gave the house to the other son and had a small house built for himself on the back of the property next to his smithy. He was content to live there, shoe a few horses, and take his meals in the main house with his son and daughter-in-law. Only, they never knew when to expect him. He was often out in his blue pickup truck — gone fishing. Or at the Crystal Café next to the train station. There, he would sit surrounded by his cronies, smoking cigarettes and swapping stories.

He was afraid of no man. Power, money and social standing meant little to him. He either liked you, or he didn't.

My father was the son who moved away after his mother died. Since the move was only 150 miles south, visits to the old home place were frequent, especially in the summers. My brother and I stood in awe of our grandfather — this growling yet gentle man. His skin was weathered and brown like the leather apron that hung beside his anvil, his blue eyes a stark contrast to his complexion. But what fascinated us most were his powerful arms and hands. Especially his right hand. Missing from it were two fingers lost years before in a sawmill accident. He always laughed when he caught us staring at the strange open space in his hand.

And Granddaddy made us laugh. His joys and gifts were simple. When we visited, he always split watermelons under the oak tree in the backyard. Two or three of the largest and ripest melons were iced down in a galvanized tub until Granddaddy, through some divination of his own, decided they were "just right for eating." The melons were pure delight on a hot August afternoon, but the best was yet to come. As fireflies began to flash like falling stars against the darkening landscape, Granddaddy would settle back in the wooden lawn chair made by his own hands, pull a pack of Lucky Strikes and a box of wooden matches from his shirt pocket and, placing the match between the stumps of his missing fingers, bring the match to fire with one sweeping strike against his pants leg. No magician amazed us more.

"Would you like to try, young lady?" Granddaddy would ask me. But try as I might I could not strike the match against the cloth.

The glow of Granddaddy's cigarette would take on an orange intensity as we waited. Finally, he would begin.

"Have I ever told you all about the big old bobcat that killed the colored woman back in 1910?"

And the stories flowed. Stories of the land and its creatures. Stories of the river — of floods and broken levees. Stories of riverboat wrecks and drownings. Stories of the railroad and cotton trains carrying bales to be milled up North. Stories of the hobos who rode the trains. Stories better than any book because they were real.

No visit was complete without a trip to Granddaddy's smithy. He seldom fired the forge unless an old friend wanted a custom fit for a favorite horse. But there were things he made without fire — just the hammer and anvil. Things like hooks and latches and rings. Granddaddy always began by setting up a rhythm with the hammer on the anvil. The hammer didn't ring against the metal tongue — it sang. And in less than two minutes he fashioned a perfect ring from an ordinary horseshoe nail. Just for me.

I was 17 when the call came that Granddaddy died of a heart attack in his old blue pickup.

The funeral home was somber and tasteful, but I couldn't help thinking how Granddaddy would hate the organ music. There were several solitary old men in the parlor. One approached my father and introduced himself.

"You don't know me. Probably never even heard Clarence talk of me. But I knew your dad. He sure was good to me. Helped me out lots of times. And I never could pay him back. So, I just wanted to come and pay my respects."

Others approached with similar stories. They were all "railroad men" — the anonymous, wandering hobos of Granddaddy's stories.

Later, my father told me that the sexton at the cemetery refused payment for digging Granddaddy's grave. He told my father that Granddaddy always paid for the opening of the grave when his friends died. Their families never knew. Only the sexton shared the secret.

Some years later I asked my father whatever became of Granddaddy's anvil.

"Why do you want to know?" he asked

"Because, if no one minds, I'd like to have it," I replied.

A shadow crossed my father's eyes as he looked up. "My brother sold it. It and all the smithing tools."

It doesn't matter about the anvil. I still hear it singing its strong and lusty song. I see Granddaddy's sweating brown face and laughing blue eyes above the leather apron. I hear his stories on the soft summer night and see the glow of his cigarette chasing the fireflies. And when the memories begin to dim, I reach into my drawer and touch the horseshoe nail rings once again.

Phillis Thompson was born in Greenwood, Mississippi, where she met her future husband in fourth grade. They have called Wilmington home for fifteen years.

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The Wasp Nest

Their bodies are burgundy brown,
shiny and intent. Bullet shaped.
With feelers they finger
where their nest had been.
That cone of pearls, empty now,
their young spun away. They circle,
disoriented. (I know how it feels.
Where is home? Where? Where?) One swipe
of the broom and I brought it down.
Great god that I am. Not. No mercy
in the laws of living. I am bigger.
I hold the broom. I own the porch.

They line up like soldiers
but there is nothing left
to guard, to fight for.

Coward that I am, I hide
behind the door, feel their wrath,
their buzz of anger, their question
why. I see their brown pain.
I can't claim
victory.

– *Ruth Moose*

Storm Season

There is a good reason forecasters give tropical storms names. They're alive and dangerous

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

When we relocated from Durham to Carolina Beach twelve years ago, we paid little attention to the weather.

In Durham, the forecast was sunny or rainy, and in winter sometimes snowy and icy. We consulted the weather to decide practical matters. "Overcoat or sweater?" When Hurricane Fran blew through in 1996, cutting power to our neighborhood for five days, we didn't know a hurricane was approaching—we were out with friends, oblivious until a nervous waitress came to our table to tell us the restaurant was shutting down because the eye was expected to pass over our area. The drive home was exhilarating—a house shutter spun across the road, streetlights fell dark. When we arrived home, we found our babysitter's husband parked in the driveway, his car idling. As soon as we unlocked the door, she fled. My husband, who'd been feeling rather festive all evening, took off his tie, collapsed on the bed, said, "Throw open the windows, baby, I want to hear the storm," and then fell into the hard fast sleep of young parenthood. I took off his shoes and listened to the wind in the trees.

At around 3 a.m., a snore awoke me. I nudged my husband awake and then realized the wind was growling menacingly. Beneath that sound, there was also a low rumble, an ongoing peal of thunder. The wolf was at the door, and our little brick bungalow shuddered. Rain cascaded from the windowsills and puddled on the floor. I reached to close the windows. A flicker of lightning revealed our black cat, Buddy, pressed against the screen, howling, but unheard over the storm's roar. I pulled him inside. The storm passed over us, knocking over ancient oaks and uprooting sidewalks and entire yards. Our little neighborhood was rendered impassable by car for several days. We dealt with the aftermath, and soon enough, the storm became an anecdote, a rare, exciting event.

When we moved to the beach, we realized immediately that storms were not anecdotes but cautionary tales. Exciting, not terribly rare, and capricious, storms were destructive, expensive, and somehow alive. No wonder we name them.

Our first storm was Alex, who skirted the coast. We were bringing our son home from a Quaker camp in the mountains. We knew there was a storm, but we were still coastal newcomers, so we ignored it as an annoyance. Then my sister called in a bit of a panic to tell us that Snow's Cut Bridge was closing. We made it across just in time. (We were informed later that it closes when winds reach a consistent 45–50 miles per hour, a bit of useful local knowledge.) Then there was poor, mad

Hurricane Ophelia, who couldn't seem to decide where she'd land and then lingered for days, like a dreary party guest. Smaller, unnamed storms made the windows moan. Our son, 10 at the time, was delighted to discover he could tell when a storm was approaching by looking at the water level in the commode, a reliable barometric pressure gauge. The animals would also get clingy before a storm, so we took that as another indicator.

The most reliable harbinger of a serious storm? The Weather Channel's Jim Cantore. When Jim comes to town, transformed from bespectacled Clark Kent to hunky Super(weather)man in a black muscle tee, you're in the crosshairs. One woman in my neighborhood, who eventually abandoned the coast for the mountains, fretted so much over the constant media attention to tropical storms that she went on anti-anxiety medication from June through November. Over time, we didn't exactly get "used to" the storms, but we came to accept them as the price of working and living on the coast. We outfitted our house with hurricane shutters, bought a lot of insurance, and talked about the type of storm that would warrant our evacuation.

Last year, for a brief period, I thought we might have to evacuate. We watched small Hurricane Joaquin "blow up" — it went from a tropical depression to a strong Category 4 storm in a day and I knew if it turned toward the Cape Fear as a Cat 4, we'd need to go. Until Joaquin, I'd always thought that tropical storms were "better" than tornadoes or earthquakes because you can see them coming. Yet monitoring the approach of a storm can bring with it a sense of foreboding and dread. Watching Joaquin, I understood better my former neighbor's fears. Joaquin died down before making landfall in the United States; we were spared the wind, but the storm left Brunswick and New Hanover counties with horrific rains and flooding. A friend in the Crosswinds subdivision of Wilmington posted photos of his street. The storm drains were clogged and water was almost to the top of his mailbox.

After the storm passed, I began to wonder and worry. How could we decide when it was safe enough to stay and when it was so dangerous we should go? Could we go to bed one night, comfortable in our decision to stay put for a Category 1, only to awaken to a Category 4 storm barreling toward us, with little ability to evacuate in time? Several weeks after Joaquin, I'd awaken in a state between dread and panic. Eventually, it subsided. If there's one thing that living at the coast has taught me, it is that I am a speck compared to a hurricane.

We've been here twelve years. Each summer the hurricane prognostications arrive: We've heard El Niño will bring fewer Atlantic storms, La Niña more. Some say a "cold blob" in the Atlantic will suppress tropical storm activity. Maybe. Who knows what will happen this year? One old salt told me that when August brings a large migration of cloudless sulphur butterflies fluttering up the beaches like a cheerful yellow banner, it means a busy storm season. That's what he said happened the year Hurricane Fran hit. It seems as reasonable a sign as any.

I can't imagine leaving Carolina Beach for good, like our neighbor. Even so, I'm wary of the storms. I've seen the waters turn from glassy green to thick, muddy waves heavy as concrete. I've felt the wind wrap around my house at 90 miles an hour. I don't think about it much, but sometimes when I'm at the beach, I'll see a cloudless sulphur flit past, and I look to the horizon.

Author Virginia Holman teaches in the creative writing department at UNC Wilmington and occasionally guides with Kayak Carolina.

My Summer Romance

We recently invited Salt *readers to tell us about their greatest summer romance in 100 words or less, and were delighted to receive so many that drew upon the magic and innocence of childhood. We hope you'll enjoy these summer shorts as much as we did – and that, perhaps, they'll stir up some sweet summer memories of your own.*

Land of Summers

Hannah Bunn

I live in a land of summers. A coastal town where the rest of the year doesn't matter much. When the air gets thick with heat and the fireflies begin to spark and you wear salt spray on your skin like perfume, life begins again. I met him the summer I turned 21: a noisy bar, green glass, clicking teeth. Summer left and so did he. It didn't matter much. I met him again three summers later: beach chairs on the roof, heat lightning, lemonade shandies, a kiss on the sagging cottage porch. It mattered. We now share a name.

Wings and a Kiss

Anne Russell, author of Carolina Yacht Club Chronicles

When I was 7, summering at Wrightsville Beach, I fell in love with Thomas, two years older, a bit of a rascal. We hid from our grandparents beneath the Yacht Club porch, treasure-hunting for coins. Thomas told me I was pretty and kissed me. In August, he entrusted me with his most prized possession, his Air Force brother's wings. The next summer I searched for Thomas, to give him back his precious wings. "Thomas is dead," my grandmother told me. "Playing with his big brother's gun." My first romance. My first awareness of the danger of guns. I still have Thomas' wings.

The Deep End

Kirstin O'Malley

He was smooth-skinned and close-cropped, tall enough to pass the pool entrance with tilted head. His grin slid sideways, like it was looking for somewhere to rest. He wasn't too pretty, so a girl needn't worry overmuch that he might do better elsewhere. Though his face was clear and he had good calves, nothing grabbed me so much as that his smile landed on me. Me the nerd magnet, me with the blueberry popsicle tongue. So we swam, self-conscious in our swimsuits, grinning at possibility in the deep end of the pool.

Five Summers and Counting

Shea Lenkaitis

In 2012, I had to leave Wilmington as summer began. When I returned in the summer of 2013, we fell for each other but didn't do anything about it because of complications, so we became best friends. We were basically dating during the summer of 2014 but didn't admit it. Summer of 2015, we barely saw each other. Now it's the summer of 2016, and we are finally together and completely in love. It may have taken us five summers to figure it out, but I think the best summer romances are the ones that last past the season.

A Map of the World

Aurora Shimshak

Drew and I still had wine left after the sunset, so we carried it up to my room. Above my bed was a map of the world. I said, "Ben and I are learning the capitals." Drew stood on my sheets to quiz me. I'd started dating Ben in June. By summer's end, we'd made out a lot and hadn't learned the capitals. Drew, I'd known since college, was gay. But one afternoon, we passed each other truffles in bright green grass. On another, we biked to Olbrich Gardens. When I started singing "Soon It's Gonna Rain," he joined in.

The Letter

Anne Barnhill

I was 12; he was 19. I was visiting our old hometown, wanting nothing more than to see my best friend, Donna. Donna and I had a lot in common: We started our periods before any of our classmates, we had budding breasts which we tried to hide with "training" bras, and we were already a little boy-crazy. The boy in question lived across the street; we spoke through the bedroom window. After I'd left, I wrote him a love letter. He wrote back, and kindly explained he was way too old for me. Best rejection, EVER.

The Boy in the Boat

Linda Thomas

He'd finally noticed me. Sunny days in a British July meant a rush to set up races on the boating lake. The sailing club boys leaning out in fleet dinghies waved at us girls. He'd chosen me to crew. I lied my way on board, knowing only port and starboard and "come about." He took the helm and we took the lead. We tacked across the white tops, a magical couple united in sea-spray. The "come about" came while I was staring at his thighs. I toppled into the chest-high water of the lake. He laughed and steered for home.

Love by the Campfire

Laura Williams

Camp Caroline. 1961. Tommy, skinny and blond; me, with brown hair and cat's-eye glasses. Splashing near the shore, Tommy shooed away the jelly fish, saving me from their stings. We held hands by the campfire when the counselors frightened us, pointing out glistening green footprints of fabled monsters. One day, the counselors announced they'd received a telegram. Campers exploded with laughter as the counselors sang the popular song "Tommy and Laura were lovers," making up words about us until they drawled out . . . "Tell Laura I love her." Tommy and I, 12 years old, just smiled and blushed.

Summer PDA

Susan Hance

We were college students at Ocean Drive with his entire family for the weekend. No privacy. On the balcony in the morning sun, he stole a simple kiss and created a firestorm. The motel owner charged us like a wet hen, berating such a public display of affection. His stepmother went into mother-warrior mode, defending us, but I was a scorned woman. PDA has come a long way since then. We left that place and the next summer, on a dark beach, to the music of crashing waves, he asked me to be his bride.

Momma Said

Betty Bell Brown

His upperclassman sister fixed us up by arranging a blind date on December 9, 1954, my freshman year. The dreaded summer came, leaving us six hours apart. My roommate invited me to visit her. She lived on the creek at Pawley's Island, South Carolina. He drove the shorter distance to see me and stayed overnight at the Sea View Inn. When he arrived, I thought I heard jukebox music. Years later I learned that his older and younger sisters had tagged along. I asked him why they had come. "'Cause Momma wouldn't let me take the car without bringing them."

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ALEMBIC DISTILLED FROM THE FINEST SUGARCANE

Lust for Life

Cocktail by Tony Cross

Photograph by James Stefuik

Not long ago, we politely challenged our favorite mix-master Tony Cross of Reverie Cocktails to come up with the perfect original summer cocktail – something that captures the essence of summertime on the Carolina coast and the excitement of life in the Port City, a cool libation for warm nights.

Always happy to perform his alchemy, Tony soon brought us a dazzling summer drink he calls, aptly enough, "Lust for Life."

Here's the recipe:

Lust for Life

1 1/2 oz Fair Game Beverage Company Amber Rum (NC# 66-350)

1/2 oz Rothman & Winter Orchard Cherry Liqueur (NC# 63-687)

3/4 oz lime juice

1/4 oz grapefruit juice

1/4 oz Rich Demerara Syrup (see below)

2 drops salt water (1 part salt to 10 parts water)

Grapefruit peel, cherry (for garnish)

Combine all ingredients in cocktail shaker, add ice, shake like hell. Double strain in chilled coupe. Garnish with grapefruit peel and cherry.

Rich Demerara Syrup:

Combine 1 cup (by weight) demerara sugar with 1/2 cup water in a pot. Turn heat on medium-high and stir until sugar is dissolved. Turn off heat and let cool.

The Man Who Loves His House

For Port City Realtor Sam Simmons, an eye for eclectic decor and family heirlooms make his Tudor Revival home the place he was destined to own

By Anne Barnhill · Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

Perhaps one of the main challenges for a Realtor is to avoid falling in love with every house you see. For Sam Simmons, broker/owner of Port City Properties, falling for a house is a familiar experience. He fell deeply in love with his current home nineteen years ago, and he's been crazy about it ever since.

"Back when I was driving for UPS, I used to park my truck in the park [at Live Oak and Park Avenue] and look at this grand old house. I never dreamed I'd be living here one day," says Simmons.

When the Tudor Revival-style house came on the market, Simmons was dying to see it; he had no interest in buying, however, and told the Realtor who had listed it just that. He was living quite happily in a small cottage on Wrightsville Avenue in a diverse neighborhood where he felt at home.

"I really just wanted to look inside, and she was OK with that. When I walked into the kitchen, I was intrigued. By the time I'd walked through the butler's pantry into the dining room, I knew I was going to buy the house," says Simmons. Within forty minutes of setting foot into the place, he made an offer.

Soon, the dream house was his, and he began renovating the 1924 home which was built by Nelson MacRae in the prestigious neighborhood MacRae developed, Oleander, in the Forest Hills area.

"Of course, MacRae picked the best lot for himself, and I'm glad he did. The old trolley used to run right by here — MacRae's father had been instrumental in developing the trolley, which went to Wrightsville Beach, and helped

develop the elder MacRae's property there. I like this lot because the yard and trees make you feel like you are living in the country, but you're very close to downtown," says Simmons. Prior to building the Tudor house, MacRae lived in what was known as MacRae's Castle on Market Street, a stone fortress modeled on a real Scottish castle.

During the 1920s, the economic boom of that decade created a lot of instant millionaires who wanted a classy new house to go along with their new money. Called "stockbroker Tudors," these heavy-beamed homes recalled the glorious days of jolly old England, connecting Americans to their aristocratic ties (real or imagined) in Europe. In Simmons' dining room, rich English paneling covers the walls. The enormous fireplace in the living room creates the spacious feel of a hunting lodge fit for a king. Beautiful paintings cover the walls, even one of a medieval soldier, adding to the feel of history that permeates the atmosphere of the house.

Unlike many large homes, Simmons' abode is warm and cozy-feeling. Part of this effect is created by the eclectic furnishings that fill each room. Simmons has put together unusual pieces — gifts from friends and clients, family items with sentimental value, expensive antiques along with things he's found in the trash — to create a space that is both interesting and homey.

"I'm so sentimental — I grew up without much, materially speaking, but with a very loving family. My dad worked for Coca-Cola, and he gave me the old 6-cent Coke dispenser I have in the butler's pantry. He gave it to me when I was still a kid and my friends used to love coming over to get a 6-cent soda. Of course, Cokes weren't special for me — we had them all the time," says Simmons.

Simmons' grandmother's table is in the kitchen, with its spindly, uneven legs showing the many layers of paint and color used over the years.

"My grandmother was a special lady. Her old stove is in the guest house. She cooked a lot of great meals on that stove. She also used to grow collards and sell them. I found the old sign she used to put on the road; so now, it, too, hangs in the guest house kitchenette," says Simmons.

Other family items include a wooden butler doorstop his father made in shop class, woven green chairs from his grandmother's house, his grandmother's old iron bed, a bronze horse sculpture that had belonged to his aunt, and a painting of his own, which is framed with wood from his grandfather's barn.

Simmons doesn't merely have family items in places of honor in his home; he also has bits of Wilmington history.

"I found this old sign down in the basement — McMillan 1957–1997. Dr. McMillan bought the house from the MacRaes. He was a local psychiatrist, and I thought it was so cool to have the sign he used. I almost tossed it away with some other trash. Luckily, I saw it and realized what it was," says Simmons. The sign now hangs above one of the doors.

DRINK
Coca-Cola

BLUE CORN

In the master bedroom is an old photograph of downtown Wilmington at around the turn of the century. The picture is one of Simmons' favorite articles. He also has a photo of MacRae's son, Hugh II, as a child playing with a home-made airplane in front of the house. Hugh MacRae II lived in the home until he was around 15 years old. His grandfather was the businessman/civic leader who gave the land for Hugh MacRae Park.

Many of the fine paintings and other items have been gifts from clients and friends, like the William Poole hammered silver lamp with geckos climbing up the base.

"I guess people know how much I love my house, and they are always giving me things to go in here," says Simmons. "I'm glad they feel that way. I have lots of social gatherings here. I want to share the house with other people who appreciate it."

Family heirlooms and gifts are not the only source of the eclectic décor that Simmons manages to pull together so beautifully. He's scavenged various items from construction sites, especially where an older home or building is being remodeled.

"I got this great bench on the porch from a trash pile — I think it looks great here," says Simmons.

Other items are from fine furniture and antique stores, some things coming from far away.

"This leather sideboard is from England. A friend was visiting over there and found this piece. He called to see if I wanted it and I said yes . . . and here it is!"

Interestingly, many of the items in the home have been crafted by Simmons himself.

"Some friends and I put together the antler chandelier in the upstairs hall. We used a cypress knee and sanded it. Then we attached the antlers," says Simmons, who is also responsible for creating several of the large mirrors that adorn the house. He uses wood from his family's barn and other items that have meaning for him to create the perfect decorative items for the house he adores.

Like many older homes, the Tudor at 1301 Live Oak holds a few surprises. There's a bomb shelter in the basement that Simmons is turning into a wine cellar. Upstairs, in what was once the maids' quarters, there is a very small closet-like room with a bookshelf. However, if you know what to do, the bookshelf (also made by Simmons) swings open, revealing a small bedroom he set up for his young nephew, who is a frequent visitor. Such touches add to the appeal of the house.

The house's charm has even been noticed by Hollywood.

"They filmed *In the Best of Families* here. That's the movie based on Jerry Bledsoe's book, *Bitter Blood*, about the Klenner family of Reidsville. I understand the Klenners also lived in a Tudor-style house. It was a lot of fun to see how the movie people used the place," says Simmons.

According to Simmons, when he purchased the house, a lot of renovation

COLLARDS
FOR SALE

DRINK
Coca-Cola

was necessary. He wanted to make sure anything he did to the house would reflect its history. For example, the upstairs bathrooms have been remodeled, but Simmons was careful to preserve the look of a home built in the 1920s. Small black and white tiles cover the floors, with subway tiles creating the shower stall. The original bathtub remains in one of the bathrooms.

One of the most winsome characteristics of the house is the guest house behind the main building. This tiny Tudor almost feels like a fairy house. Once inside, you'll find a kitchenette, a small bathroom and a comfortable bedroom. Most of the guest house is furnished with items from Simmons' family — his grandmother's TV, which fits perfectly in a closet, and her stove, which should bring great cooking karma to the guests staying here.

"This is a great neighborhood and everyone is so friendly. Neighbors have used the guest house when they are having a special event like a wedding," says Simmons.

Simmons is originally from Whiteville, but came to Wilmington for college at UNCW.

"I came for college and just never left. I love it here," says Simmons.

For Simmons, falling in love is easy, whether you fall for a town such as Wilmington or a house. He believes in love at first sight too — which explains how he came to live in his very own dream house.

Anne Barnhill is the author of four books, most recently the historical novel Queen Elizabeth's Daughter, *from St. Martin's Press. Last year, she was awarded a Regional Artist Grant from the Arts Council of Wilmington. Currently, she is working on a novel set in West Virginia in 1881.*

ALMANAC

July

By Rosetta Fawley

Plum in the middle

Japanese plums (*Prunus salicina* and *Prunus triflora*) are in season this month. Be sure to harvest them when they're fully ripe. You'll have to keep going back to the trees as the fruit ripen at different times. Wait until the skin feels soft and gives a little under gentle pressure. They should easily twist off the branches.

If this is the first year for your plum tree, mid-summer is the best time for pruning. Japanese plums respond best to an open center shape. Cut back shoots on the top of the tree by two or three buds. Come back about a month later. Choose three main branches, equally spaced, and cut back anything growing around them. This trinity will be the tree's main branches.

Next year, in the early summer, cut back the branches in the middle of the tree so they're short. Prune any shoots coming out below your three main branches too.

The year after next, cut back the younger branches to maintain the tree's shape.

If yours is an established tree, then you already know all this and you're harvesting. Plums keep well in the fridge. Don't save them for breakfast; you know what will happen.

Tinker, Tailor
Soldier, Sailor,
Rich man, Poor man,
Beggar man,
Thief.

Traditional English rhyme for counting fruit stones

Swing Low

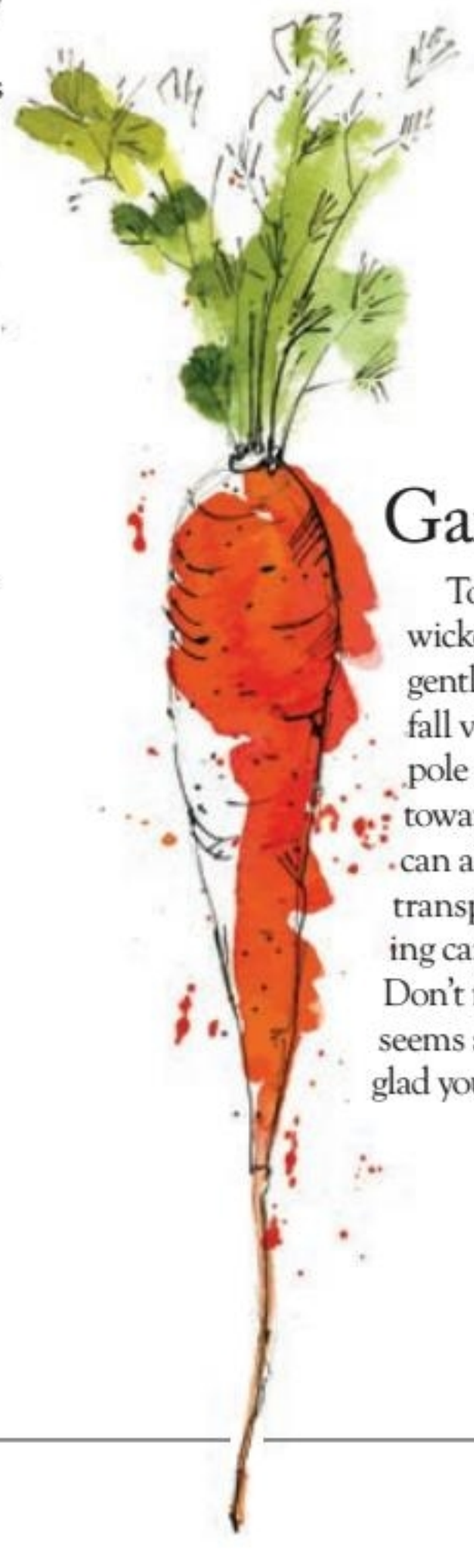
It's Hammock Day on July 22. That's a Friday. Why it's not on the weekend is a mystery to the Almanac. She can only think that it's to increase the decadence of the occasion.

Go on, award yourself the day off.

If you need to a buy a hammock to prepare for your day of swinging in the shade, then you have quite a choice. This time of year a rope hammock might be more comfortable than a fabric one. But the fabric hammocks are pretty. Have a look at Mayan hammocks. They're made of brightly colored cord and they're very strong. You can fit a few friends in there. Why indulge in Hammock Day alone? More than one person in a hammock equals a hammock party.

This, too, is that kindliest of arts which makes requital tenfold in kind for every work of the laborer. She is the sweet mistress who, with smile of welcome and outstretched hand, greets the approach of her devoted one, seeming to say, Take from all thy heart's desire. She is the generous hostess; she keeps open house for the stranger. For where else, save in some happy rural seat of her devising, shall a man more cheerily cherish content in winter, with bubbling bath and blazing fire? or where, save afield, in summer rest more sweetly, lulled by babbling streams, soft airs, and tender shades?

From *The Oeconomicus* by Xenophon, ca. 360BC.
Translation by H.G. Dakyns



Gardening Comes Before a Fall

Too energetic for Hammock Day? Well, there's no rest for the wicked, they say. While all around you are snoring and swaying gently in the shade, you can start planning — and planting — your fall vegetable garden. Carrot seeds can go in this month, as can pole and bush snap peas, winter squash and rutabaga. Put in beets toward the end of July, Brussels sprouts too. At that time you can also plant collards as seeds or transplants, cabbage as transplants only. And this is the last month for planting cantaloupes, so make the most of them for fall. Don't forget a few pumpkin transplants. It seems a long way off now, but you'll be glad you did come Halloween.

Arts Calendar

4th of July Festival

7/1-4

Yonder Mountain String Band

7/7

Movie in the Park

7/9

7/1 Airlie Concert
6–8 p.m. Stray Local joins the Airlie Gardens summer concert series performing American folk. Food and wine available for purchase. Admission: $2–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.airliegardens.org.

7/1–4 NC 4th of July Festival
9 a.m. – 9 p.m. (Friday); 8 a.m. –10 p.m. (Saturday); 9 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Sunday); 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Monday). Patriotic celebration featuring an arts and crafts show, historic church tours, classic car show, food vendors, children's games, live music, beach activities, skate and shag competitions, raffles, parade, fireworks and more. Various venues in Southport and Oak Island. Info: (910) 457-5578 or www.nc4thofjuly.com.

7/2 Native Plant Sale
2–4 p.m. Local grower Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company will be outside the store with a variety of native plants for sale. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

7/2 & 3 Ocean City Jazz Festival
5 p.m. Contemporary jazz festival featuring live performances, food trucks, beer, wine and a silent auction. Artists include Ashleigh E. Smith, Gerald Veasley, Tia Fuller, Marcus Anderson, John Brown and Herlin Riley. Admission: $15–65. Ocean City Community Center, 2649 Island Drive, Wilmington. Info: oceancityjazzfest.com.

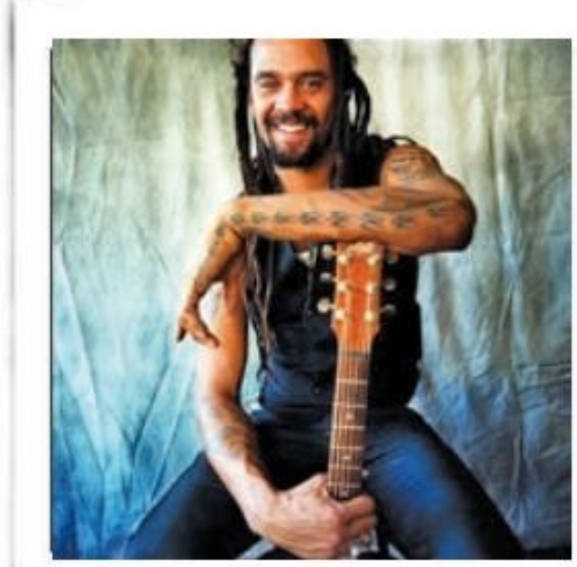
7/3 Boogie in the Park
5–7 p.m. Roots United joins the "Boogie in the Park" summer concert series performing roots reggae. Bring blankets and snacks. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

7/4 4th of July Celebration
5–9 p.m. (celebration); 9–10 p.m. (fireworks). Downtown celebration including food vendors, live music and fireworks along the Cape Fear River. Admission: Free. Riverfront Park, Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-4602 or www.wilmingtonnc.gov.

7/4 Word Weavers
7–9 p.m. A Christian writer's group, that strives to mentor writers by offering critiques, workshops, retreats, and keeping members informed about conferences and writing opportunities. Life Point Church, 3534 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 619-7344 or sondradron@bellsouth.net.

L Shape Lot at Airlie Gardens

7/15



Michael Franti Concert

7/18

Shakey Graves at Greenfield Lake

7/28

7/6 Family Nature Program
6:30–7:30 p.m. Alligators. Get to know an ancient North Carolina native in this interactive live animal program on the American alligator and learn about the numerous adaptations helping them survive. Presented by the NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or ww.halyburtonpark.com.

7/6–24 Musical Theatre
8 p.m. (Wednesday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). The brilliant and witty *1776: The Musical* breathes life and song into the story of how we took our first steps as a nation. Admission: $24–32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

7/7 Beach Birding Program
9–10 a.m. Learn all about the fascinating birds you can see in our beautiful coastal environment, and pick up some tips on the best places and times of year to find them. Admission: Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

7/7 Concert on the Coast
6:30–8:30 p.m. Jack Jack 180 performs pop, rock and dance music at Leland's "Concert on the Coast" music series. Blankets, chairs and picnics welcome. Admission: Free. Leland Municipal Park, 102 Town Hall Drive, Leland. Info: (910) 332-4814 or www.ncbrunswick.com.

7/7 Greenfield Lake Concert
7 p.m. American progressive bluegrass group Yonder Mountain String Band performs live at Greenfield Lake. Admission: $25–30. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/7–10 Sarus Festival
Schedule available online. Festival for site-specific and experimental art. International and local artists perform new works created for our area and offer workshops and performance opportunities to community members. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: www.sarusfestival.org.

7/8 Pleasure Island Concerts
6:30–8:30 p.m. Justin Cody Fox joins Pleasure Island's summer concert series performing southern rock and alternative country. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

7/8–10 King Mackerel Tournament
12–11 p.m. (Friday); 2–11 p.m. (Saturday); 12–7

p.m. (Sunday). Annual Pleasure Island King Mackerel fishing tournament featuring a captain's meeting, 50/50 raffle, kick-off party, live music, weigh-in and awards ceremony. Canal Drive, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 470-1374 or www.gotemonliveclassic.com.

7/9 Beach Birding Program
9:15 –10:30 a.m. Learn all about the fascinating birds you can see in our beautiful coastal environment, and pick up some tips on the best places and times of year to find them. Admission: Free. Temptations Everyday Gourmet, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

7/9 Battleship 101
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Volunteers stationed throughout the ship engage visitors in subjects such as gunnery, radar, sickbay, galley, engineering and daily shipboard life. Admission: $6–14. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

7/9 Family Science Saturday
10 a.m. (Pre-school); 11 a.m. & 12 p.m. (ages 5–14). Creative Chemistry. Investigate states of matter, conduct experiments, and explore solids, liquids and gases. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

7/9 Kids Concert
2 p.m. Pamlico Joe and Clean Water Flow perform live. The program encourages kids to explore the natural world and become more environmentally aware through reading and writing. Admission: Free. Pleasure Island Library, 1401 North Lake Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 798-6353 or www.nhclibrary.org.

7/9 Native Plant Sale
2–4 p.m. Local grower Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company will be outside of the store with a variety of native plants for sale. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

7/9 Movie in the Park
Starts at sunset. Family-friendly screening of *The Peanuts Movie* (2015, G, 1h 28 min) in the park. Blankets, chairs and picnics welcome. Admission: Free. Leland Municipal Park, 102 Town Hall Drive, Leland. Info: (910) 332-4814 or www.townofleland.com.

7/10 Summer Bridal Expo
12–3 p.m. Bridal expo featuring over fifty of the finest wedding vendors in the area. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5101 or www.carolinaweddingguide.com.

7/10 BAC Concert
8 p.m. American singer/songwriter Robert Earl Keen performs live at Brooklyn Arts Center. Admission: $22.50–39.50. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

7/11 & 12 Youth Nature Program
10–11 a.m. Children discover nature through stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes and crafts. This week's theme is "Turtles." Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

7/12 Fire Safety Story Time
10 a.m. Local firefighters will read a story, share fire safety tips, demonstrate some of their equipment and answer questions. Admission: Free. Myrtle Grove Public Library, 5155 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6353 or www.nhclibrary.org.

Opera Wilmington

7/29

7/13 Southport Bird Walk
8:30–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden staff for a free bird walk around Southport's historic district and waterfront. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

7/13 Snake & Turtle Feeding
4–4:30 p.m. Enjoy a brief presentation about the live animals on display in the event center and watch the feeding of at least one snake and turtle. Admission: $1. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

7/13 Family Nature Program
6–7 & 7–8 p.m. Birds of Prey. Get a closer look at live birds of prey and various raptors as you learn about these amazing birds. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or ww.halyburtonpark.com.

7/14 Film Screening & Discussion
6:30 p.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden for a screening of *The Messenger*, a visually breathtaking documentary about the beauty and importance of the imperiled songbird, and what it means to all of us on both a global and human level if we lose them. Entrance fee will be donated to Audubon North Carolina. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

7/14 Jazz at the Mansion
6:30–8:30 p.m. The Wilmington Jazz Messengers join the "Jazz at the Mansion" concert series on the Bellamy lawn. Beer and wine cash bar on site. Admission: $12. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

7/15 Airlie Concert
6–8 p.m. L Shape Lot joins the Airlie Gardens summer concert series performing Americana, bluegrass and country. Food and wine available for purchase. Admission: $2–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.airliegardens.org.

7/15 & 16 Seaglass Salvage Market
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Friday); 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Once a month indoor/outdoor market filled with upcycled, recycled and repurposed furniture and home décor items, salvage pieces perfect for DIY projects, yard and garden décor, jewelry and local honey. Admission: Free. 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway (Hwy 74/76), Leland. Info: www.seaglasssalvagemarket.com.

7/15–17 Pro-Am Surf Fest
8 a.m. Attracting dozens of amateur and professional surfers from around the world, the Pro-Am has become one of the largest surfing contests on the East Coast. Event boasts over $25,000 in cash and prizes and features a music and arts festival on Saturday evening. Birmingham Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-3821 or www.sweetwatersurfshop.com.

7/16 Pistons, Plugs & Shocks Car Show
9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Classic car show at Poplar Grove Plantation featuring vehicles representing each decade of ingenuity and design. Admission: $15–20 to register. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org/festivals/car-show-2016.

7/16 Children's Theatre
2 p.m. Rags to Riches Theatre from Durham, N.C. presents *The Princess and the Pea*. The classic

folktale is brought to theatrical life with the help of music, laughter, improvisation and audience participation. Admission: Free. Main Library, 201 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6353 or www.nhclibrary.org.

7/16 Native Plant Sale

2–4 p.m. Local grower Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company will be outside the store with a variety of native plants for sale. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

7/16 Movie in the Park

Starts at sunset. Family-friendly screening of *Hotel Transylvania 2* (2015, PG, 1h 29 min) in the park. Blankets, chairs and picnics welcome. Admission: Free. Leland Municipal Park, 102 Town Hall Drive, Leland. Info: (910) 332-4814 or www.townofleland.com.

7/16 Summer Flashlight Tour

8–10 p.m. Historical walking tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery lead by local historians Chris Fonvielle, Robin Triplett and superintendent Eric Kozen. Bring your own flashlight. Admission: $15. Oakdale Cemetery, 520 North Fifteenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-5682 or www.oakdalecemetery.org.

7/17 Boogie in the Park

5–7 p.m. South of K joins the "Boogie in the Park" summer concert series performing bluegrass. Bring blankets and snacks. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

7/17–19 Cape Fear Blues Festival

6 p.m. (Friday); 11 a.m. (Saturday); 12 p.m. (Sunday). Three-day, all-day celebration showcasing local, regional and national musicians with live concerts, blues jams, workshops, parties and a guitar giveaway. Various locations including The Rusty Nail, Finkelstein's Music, Ted's Fun on the River and River Front Park. Info: (910) 350-8822 or www.capefearblues.org/festival.

7/18 Greenfield Lake Concert

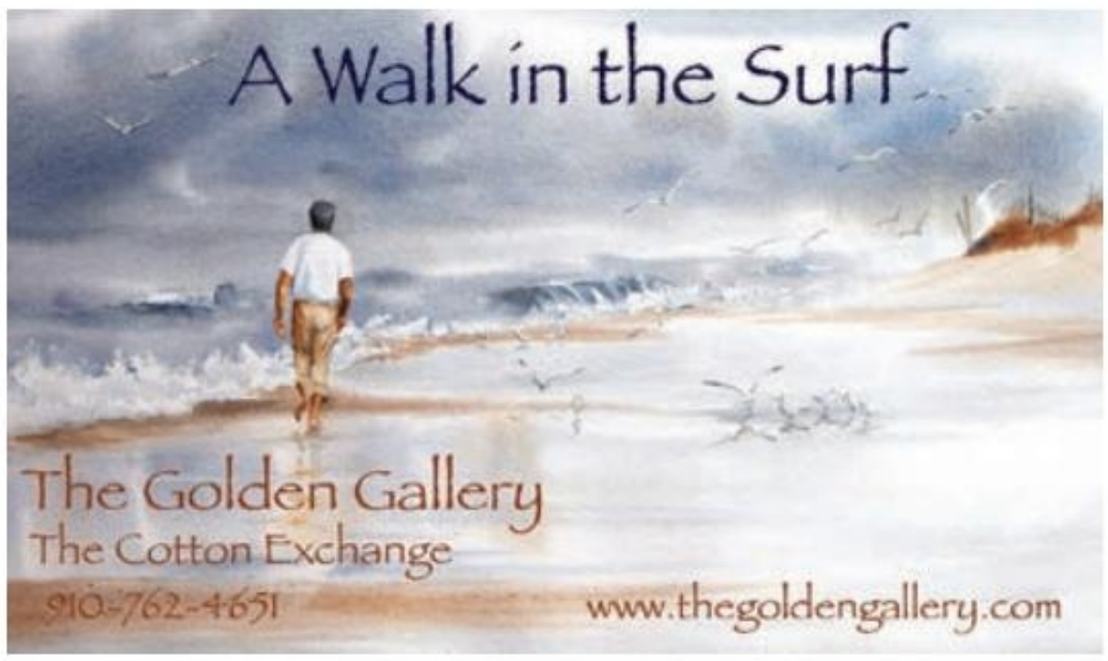
6 p.m. Musician, humanitarian, and children's book author Michael Franti is recognized as a pioneering force using music as a vehicle for positive change as well as his unforgettable, high energy shows with his band, Spearhead. Admission: $41–46. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/21 Concert on the Coast

6:30–8:30 p.m. the Hatch Brothers perform acoustic rock at "Leland's Concert on the Coast"

Turtle Talks

Monday



music series. Blankets, chairs and picnics welcome. Admission: Free. Leland Municipal Park, 102 Town Hall Drive, Leland. Info: (910) 332-4814 or www.ncbrunswick.com.

7/22 Fourth Friday
6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Admission: Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

7/22 Pleasure Island Concerts
6:30–8:30 p.m. Mark Roberts Band joins Pleasure Island's summer concert series performing dance, blues and country. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

7/23 Magic Show
2 p.m. No Sleeves Magic presents "Pirates Have Problems!" In this swashbuckling slapstick adventure, two pirates claim they've already found all the treasure in the world. Turns out they wasted all the loot, and now have to find "real jobs." They decide to become the world's only pirate/magicians. Admission: Free. Main Library, 201 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6353 or www.nhclibrary.org.

7/23 Greenfield Lake Concert
7 p.m. The Penguin and Huka Entertainment present former Black Crowes blues powerhouse, The Chris Robinson Brotherhood, live in concert. Admission: $24–28. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 332-0983 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/23–24 Inside One Tree Hill
Schedule available online. Experience behind-the-scenes aspects of the popular Wilmington TV show with cast and crew. Includes autograph sessions, photo ops, Q&A, meet and greet, props and memorabilia for sale. Admission: $30–600. CFCC Humanities & Fine Arts Center, 701 North Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-7999 or insideoth.com/register.html.

7/25 Hippie Ball
7 p.m. Fundraiser/celebration for Kids Making It ('60s and '70s-era theme), including food, drinks, silent auction, dancing and live music. Admission: $50. UNCW Warwick Center, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 262-3452 or www.kidsmakingit.org.

7/25 & 26 Youth Nature Program
10–11 a.m. Children discover nature through stories, songs, hands-on activities, hikes and crafts. This week's theme is "Dragonflies." Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

7/26 Health Care Clinic
2:30 p.m. The Health Care Power of Attorney Clinic answers questions about end of life issues and advanced health care directives. Participants will be able to speak to a virtual attorney during a live Q&A. Advanced health care directives forms will be available. Seating is limited, pre-registration required. Admission: Free. Main Library, 201 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6306 or nhclibrary.org.

Carolina Beach Farmers Market

Saturday

7/27 Page to Stage
6:30 p.m. Writers, actors and producers share original works of comedy and drama with the community and encourage feedback every fourth Wednesday. Admission: Free, donations appreciated. Cameron Art Museum, Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

7/27 Night Hike
8:30–9:30 p.m. Join park naturalists for a prowl in the park after dark and clear up some misconceptions about night creatures such as bats and owls. Learn how these animals have adapted to night life. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or ww.halyburtonpark.com.

7/28 Greenfield Lake Concert
7 p.m. American blues, folk and rock and roll musician Shakey Graves performs live at Greenfield Lake. Admission: $22–28. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 332-0983 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/29 Greenfield Lake Concert
7 p.m. Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award Winner and Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Gregg Allman performs live. Admission: $62.50–89.50. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

7/29 Summer Chill Concert
7 p.m. The East Coast Shag Classic Summer Chill Concert features a live performance by Band of Oz. Admission: $20–25. Proceeds benefit Hope Abounds, a nonprofit supporting women and children diagnosed with cancer. Topsail Island Moose Lodge, 13175 NC Hwy 50, Holly Ridge. Info: (910) 297-7688 or www.eastcoastshagclassic.com.

7/29 Opera Wilmington
Time 7:30 p.m. Opera Wilmington presents the opening night gala of Mozart's comedic masterpiece *Così Fan Tutte* sung in Italian with English super-titles. UNCW Cultural Arts Building, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (212) 795-5503 or www.opera-wilmington.org.

7/30 Native Plant Sale
2–4 p.m. Local grower Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company will be outside the store with a variety of native plants for sale. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

7/30 Southeast Crab Fest
4 p.m. All-you-can-eat blue crabs, fish and chips, and music at Hugh MacRae Park. Admission: $10–29. Hugh MacRae Park, 314 Pine Grove Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.southeastcrabfest.com.

7/31 SkyQuest
1:30/2:15/3 p.m. *Exploring Mars*. Journey to the red planet and explore the science of a planet humans have yet to step foot on. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday Sunrise Ocean Flow Yoga
7:30–8:30 a.m. All levels oceanfront yoga practice with Instructor Tamara Cairns. Yoga mat provided. Admission: $10. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Monday Wrightsville Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts.

Opens 5/16. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townof-wrightsvillebeach.com.

Monday — Up & Active!
6–7 p.m. Join Lynne and the Wave for an hour of music, games, and fun for everyone on the Ocean Front Park lawn including face painting with P3 Planning. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Monday — Turtle Talks
7–8 p.m. Learn about sea turtles with the local Pleasure Island Sea Turtle Project. Starts 6/13. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkure-beach.org.

Monday – Wednesday Cinematique Films
7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check on-line for updated listings and special screenings. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday — Kure Beach Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market featuring locally grown produce and artisan crafts. Admission: Free. 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Tuesday — Wine Tasting
6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday — Cape Fear Blues Jam
8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday — Story Time by the Sea
10–11:30 a.m. Join the Princess and her fairytale friends for story time and fun activities for boys and girls. Don't forget your camera. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Wednesday — Tai Chi at CAM
12:30–1:30 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday — Evening Nature Series
Enjoy an evening in the park with your family learning about nature. Each week a new theme will be presented. Admission: $5. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or ww.halyburtonpark.com.

Wednesday — Hoop Dance Jam
7–9 p.m. Bring your hoop and dance to some great tunes. Every skill level welcome, no experience needed. Admission: $3/class; hoops available for $35. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Movie at the Lake

Sunday

Wednesday — Wednesday Echo
7:30–11:30 p.m. Weekly singer/songwriter open mic night that welcomes all genres of music. Each person will have 3–6 songs. Palm Room, 11 East Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-3040.

Wednesday & Thursday — Farmers Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. (Wednesday); 3–7 p.m. (Thursday). Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 Us Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Thursday — Yoga at the CAM
12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

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Thursday **Sounds of Summer**
6:30–8 p.m. Free outdoor music series presented by WECT at Wrightsville Beach Park. 7/7: Selah Dubb; 7/14: Jack Jack 180; 7/21: Machine Gun; 7/28: Bantum Rooster. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach, 1 Bob Sawyer Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Thursday **Boardwalk Blast Music**
6:30–9:30 p.m. Family-friendly concerts at the boardwalk featuring a sunset foreworks display. 7/7: Randy McQuay Trio/Rebekah Todd & The Odyssey; 7/14: Massive Grass/Bakkwoodz; 7/21: The Wooden Steel Band/Fearless; 7/28: Justin Cody Fox/The Cut. Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

Friday **Downtown Sundown**
6–10 p.m. Free downtown concert series overlooking the Cape Fear River. 7/1: 20 Ride; 7/8: Breakfast Club; 7/15: Mystic Vibrations; 7/22: Funky Monks; 7/29: Dave Mathews Tribute Band. Admission: Free. Parking lot at the corner of Princess & Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-7349 or www.downtownsundown.com.

Friday & Saturday **Dinner Theatre**
7 p.m. TheatreNOW presents Celia Rivenbark's *We're Just Like You, Only Prettier*, a collection of southern humor come to theatrical life. Admission: $17–37. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Saturday **Carolina Beach Farmers Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling fresh local produce, meats, wines, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 431-8122 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

Saturday **Riverfront Farmers Market**
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.

Sunday **Bluewater Waterfront Music**
4–7 p.m. Summer concerts on the waterfront patio. 7/3: Stereotype; 7/10: Port City Shakedown; 7/17: Jack Jack 180; 7/24: L Shaped Lot. Admission: Free. Bluewater Waterfront Grill, 4 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8500 or www.bluewaterdining.com.

Sunday **Movie at the Lake**
8:45 p.m. Family-friendly outdoor movie screening by the lake. Popcorn, soda and candy available for purchase. 7/3: *The Sandlot* (1993, PG, 1h 41 min.); 7/10: *Hotel Transylvania 2* (2015, PG, 1h 29 min.); 7/17: *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015, PG, 135 min.); 7/24: *The Good Dinosaur* (2015, PG, 93 min.); 7/31: *Inside Out* (2015, PG, 95 min.). Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 & Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

To add a calendar event, please contact saltmagazine.calendar@gmail.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

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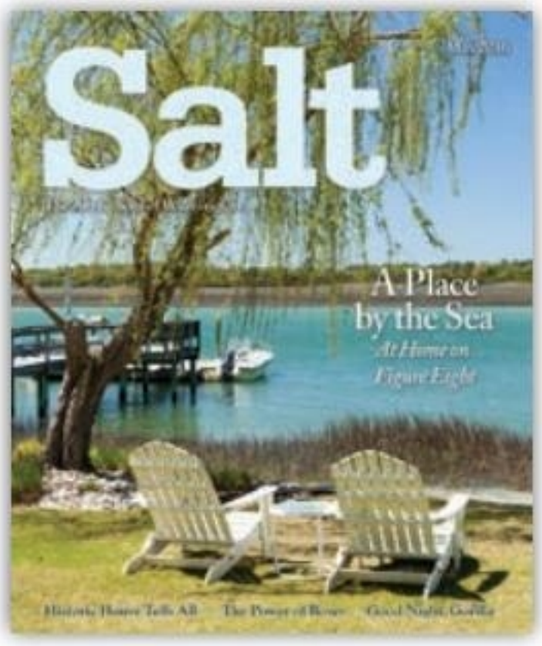

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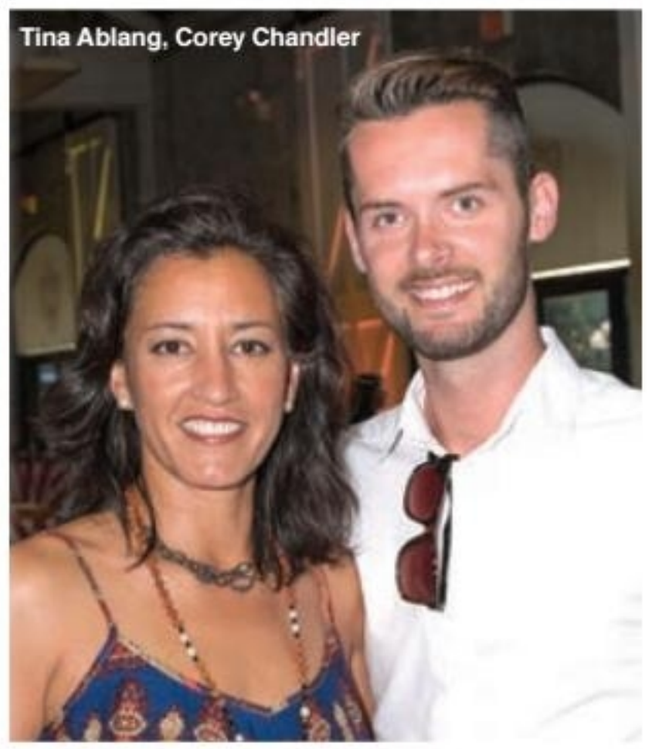
John Gaddy, Ella Deaver

Misty Andrews, Victoria Nomdedeu

Michelle Inman, Kelly Buffalino


Tina Ablang, Corey Chandler

Ashley Baker, Tiffany Griffin, Susie Weiler, Kathleen Stoiko, Lori Murette

Rhonda Bachman, Michelle Bruer, Kathy Hairr

Victor Gray

Michelle Sherman, Susan Valashinas, Tiffany Thompson, Renee Saffo, Michelle Clark, Stacie Carilli, Kim Weckel, Elise Mullaney

Micheala Cortner, Lilly Kays, Hannah Marable, Ciara Henihan

Russ Yandle, Denise Hicks

Ann Suttles, Tony Whitaker, Angie Royal

Port City People

3rd Annual Kentucky Derby Party

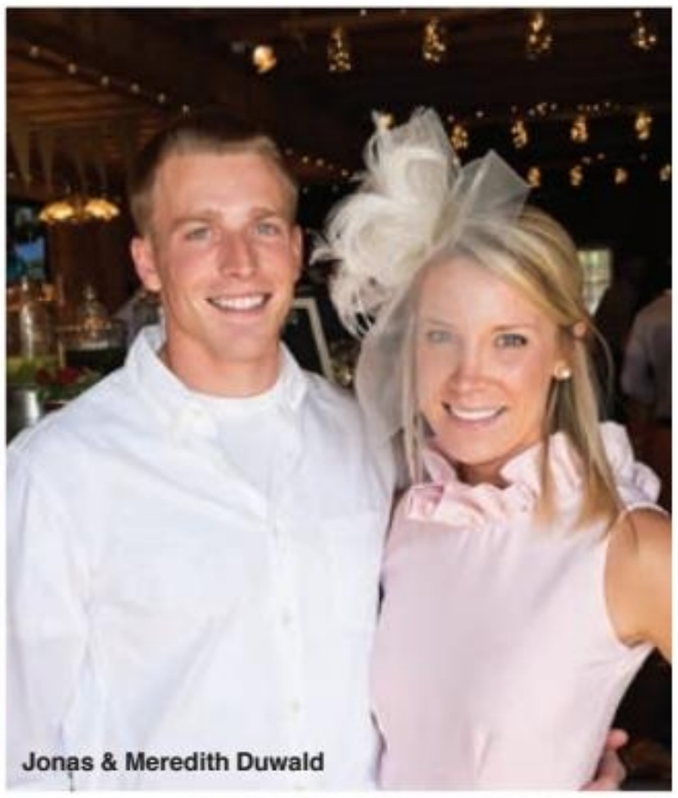
Poplar Grove Plantation

Saturday, May 7, 2016

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Buddy & Leigh Anne Orol

Jane Cash, Sherri Brink, Carol Waldkirch, Cassidy Pomeroy-Carter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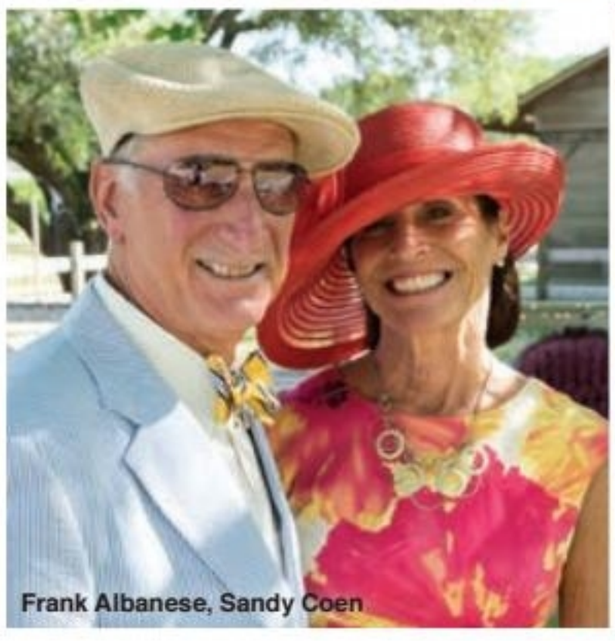
Frank Albanese, Sandy Coen

Tim & Leigh Lewis

Port City People

2016 JDRF Hope Gala

Wilmington Convention Center

Saturday, May 21, 2016

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Jon, Abby & Sheilia Evans

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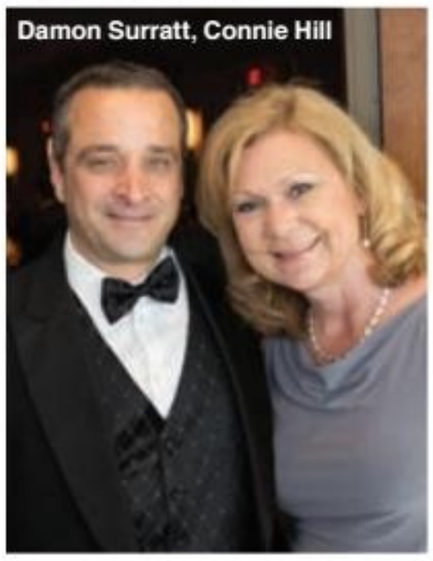
Terry Espy, John Sharkey, Aileen Carr


Damon Surratt, Connie Hill

Michael & Heather Favorito

David Scott, Jennifer Chiavetta

Dr. Heather & Charles Davis

Darron Monroe, Marilyn Monroe, Becky Barrows

Jordan & Sandra Holloway

Pullen & Katie Daniel

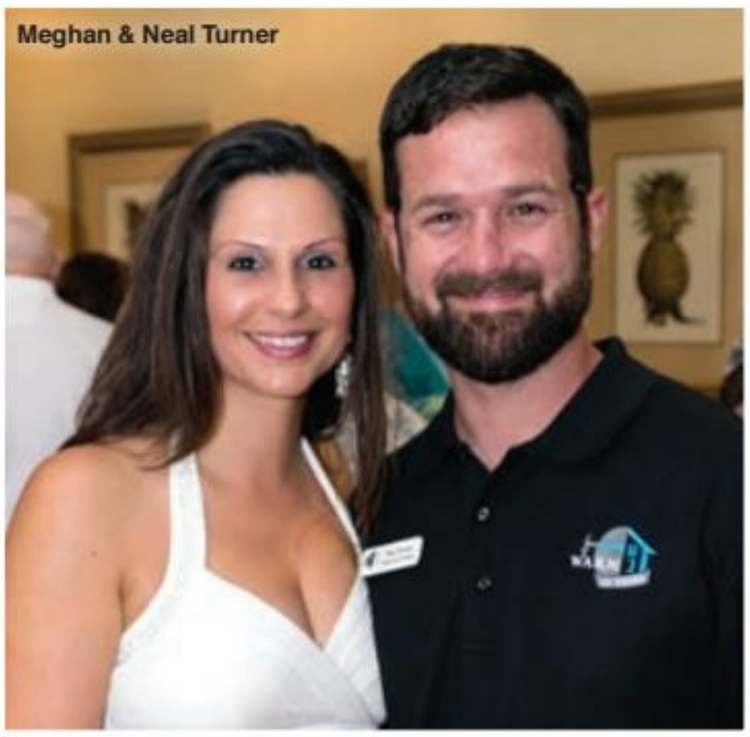
Port City People

WARM "Raise the Roof" Gala & Auction

Celebrating WARM'S 20th Anniversary

Friday, June 3, 2016

Photographs by Bill Ritenour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Whitney Finley, Kristy Becker, Beverly Ward

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Tea Leaves for Two

And other jujus for July

By Astrid Stellanova

Thank you, Gentle Reader, for sending the Detox tea. I am sipping from a china cup while reading from my Red Neck dictionary and pondering the many ways we gain insights. Some of us go to our preachers, our teachers and our friends. Some of us consult the tea-leaves and the cosmic truths. Yet be forewarned, Star Children: July stirs up fireworks of all kinds. Ad Astra — Astrid

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
Birthday child, you have had a long spell of feeling unsure of yourself just because of your past. Some were born to live on a house with wheels. Some were born to live high on the hog. But that has not one thing to do with our place in the greater scheme of things: You are as worthy of love and happiness as anyone. High or low born, we were all born with a quest: to learn from the past. If you do that, you will graduate from spiritual ignorance to live with freedom and enjoy all your years more blissfully.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
You stirred in the grits pot too long and some things look overdone and ruined. If you have the ability to smile and put the wooden spoon down, you'll regain your lost perspective on life. This is a turnaround month. It isn't required to stand at the stove and feel the heat; sit at the table and enjoy being a guest.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
Someone is blowing sunshine up your skirt and you want to believe it. It isn't exactly true, but it is truthy enough to turn your head. Honey, keep both feet on the floor — for more reasons than one — and remember that a flattering devil wants something from you that is worth more than they are offering in return.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
Sure, you've got a problem to solve. But in order to get to the solution you don't have to square a hypotenuse. You know you have a tendency to overdo anything you think is worth doing. This problem is much simpler than you first thought, especially if you let a friend help.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
You've been acting out just like a wild child: mad, bad and howling at the moon. Meanwhile, what about that new person who grabbed your attention? Well, there's a lot less to them than meets the eye, Sugar. Use the good senses you abandoned earlier this month.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
The hilarious thing about that certain someone you've been looking up to is that they are not all that and a pack of cheese nabs. They've been acting like a fool raised by a pack of wild hot dogs. You might want to go it alone a while without a wingman and see if you don't get a better reception from others.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
The stars have sure been kind to you, Baby. The corn is high and your ship came in. So how come you have been acting like the elastic in your underwear is melting? Get up on the right side of the bed and give your pals a break. Also, notice the number three and how it figures into something of importance.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
If you like your current situation, Honey, it's like being a prisoner but thinking you are the warden. Some people don't deserve the multiple chances you have given them. You are not a prisoner of your fate; open the cell door and walk out, Sugar Foot.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
You were the last person to arrive at the meeting and the first to leave. Is it any wonder some question your commitment? If you want what you tell yourself you want, then step it up. If you really don't, step down and walk. Either way you go is more honest than pretense and is going to make for a better journey.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
Sure, their handshake felt like you were handling a dead snake. Sure thing, they weren't exactly dynamic. But you are not yet in charge of the Universe, so you can afford to let it pass without throwing them in the dungeon. MYOB and pour that fierce energy into creative projects you have ignored.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
Earnest persistence is not a virtue if you find yourself secretly wanting to chew your own arm off just to get out of a trap you laid. Unclench your teeth and fist. Let it go, Baby Cakes. In very short time you will have two offers to choose from, and the hardest thing is this: Both of them would be good choices.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
Somewhere, someone is desperately trying to reach out to you. Try taking the aluminum foil off the windows and catch their signal. They come in peace, Honey, and from Deep Time. It might even be an Avatar. Or, it might be you need to move the TV antenna.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Snake Business

Far better than a birthday Xbox . . . I think

By Clyde Edgerton

My son Nathaniel wanted an Xbox for his thirteenth birthday.

I knew that was another screen thing. And given the screen things used by our children — TV screens, phone screens, movie screens, game-player screens, iPod screens, iPad screens, Nook screens, kiddie screens, and on and on — his mother and I have been delivering frequent screen screams.

A screen scream starts when one of us asks the kids gently — then less gently — to please please put the screen away, go sit on the side porch and look through the porch screen at a real tree. Who knows, someone might see a wild animal, like a squirrel.

I saw a squirrel last week sitting in a chair on our back deck. He was texting on an iPhone.

The break came when Nathaniel mentioned that he wouldn't mind having a snake for his birthday.

"A snake? I said. "Instead of an Xbox?"

"Well . . . yes," he said.

Hurray, I thought. By all means.

I would have happily considered a small pond dug in the backyard with a pet hippopotamus inserted . . . anything but another screen thing.

Nathaniel ordered a "ball python" online, $39. A few days later it came in a box.

Next, find a snake aquarium — basically any aquarium, I figured. "Let's go to a thrift store and get an aquarium," I said. "It'll be cheaper than at the pet store."

I love thrift stores. I could buy a picture frame and salt and pepper shakers for the kitchen table, or something, and still get out under $60 total for the whole birthday — with extra thrift store stuff thrown into the bargain.

"Snake aquariums are on sale at the pet store," said Nathaniel.

I had a vague worry about going into a pet store to buy anything. An aggressive salesperson would probably want to throw in something extra, unnecessary.

I grew up in a time and place where you made your own dog collar and leash, fed the dog on table scraps and Acme dog food (which cost about 75 cents for a 50-pound bag), kept the dog outside in a dog house and pen, and only took it to the vet if it had been run over but wasn't dead yet.

We had happy, healthy, faithful dogs, too. And we killed most any snake we saw (which I now regret).

"I'll bet we can do better at a thrift store," I said to Nathaniel.

"I doubt it," he said.

"Let's just check it out," I said.

"It's a dollar a gallon — on sale — at the pet store for an aquarium," said Nathaniel. "We need a twenty-gallon tank. Forty dollars, on sale for twenty."

"Well, let's just see."

In the thrift store, the owner said this: "I can give you a twenty-gallon aquarium for thirty bucks. You can't beat that at no pet store."

Nathaniel started for the door, after saying, "I told you."

I started to ask the man if he had any picture frames, but decided to go ahead to the pet store to get the aquarium. Looked like I could perhaps come in at around $60 — $40 for the snake, $20 for the aquarium. I couldn't imagine an Xbox selling for less that $150 or $200. This would work.

At the pet store, the happy salesperson escorted us to the aquarium. He said, "We got a sale going: twenty gallons for twenty bucks." Then he said, "Let's go get the other items you'll need."

I said, "But — "

It was too late. You, dear reader, already get the picture.

Nathaniel and the salesperson were moving from spot to spot collecting items in a cart that had appeared from nowhere. I'd catch up when they were leaving for a new spot — another item in the cart, another item to be on the receipt. I found that list a few days back, a scroll that includes a bamboo bar from which the snake can hang; a screen cover for the top of the aquarium so the snake can't escape; a curved piece of wood the snake can hide under; a larger curved piece of wood, same purpose; a dish for water; the "bargain priced" aquarium; and more than three items I can't identify.

Gentle reader — will you understand if I don't give you a dollar tally? I don't want my mama (in her final resting place) to find out how much money I spent on something she'd . . . well, kill with a shovel.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

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